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**From closed museum spaces to inclusive cultural meeting points:
connecting indigenous heritage collections and communities in the
Dominican Republic**

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Citation

Alvarez, A. V. (2021, December 8). *From closed museum spaces to inclusive cultural meeting points: connecting indigenous heritage collections and communities in the Dominican Republic*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3247080>

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FROM CLOSED MUSEUM SPACES TO INCLUSIVE CULTURAL MEETING POINTS:

Connecting Indigenous heritage collections and
communities in the Dominican Republic

ARLENE ÁLVAREZ



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TO INCLUSIVE CULTURAL MEETING POINTS**

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Arlene Verónica Álvarez

2021

Leiden

**FROM CLOSED MUSEUM SPACES TO
INCLUSIVE CULTURAL MEETING POINTS**

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Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van

de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit te Leiden,
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus prof. dr. Ir. H. Bijl,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op 8 december 2021
klokke 16:15 uur

door

Arlene Verónica Álvarez

geboren te La Romana (Dominicaanse Republiek)
in 1973

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Image cover: Finn van der Leden

This research has been funded by the *KNAW-Meriam Prize* for female scientists awarded to Prof. dr. Corinne L. Hofman in 2013 (Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences). It has also received support from the ERC-Synergy Nexus 1492 project financed by the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013)/ERC grant agreement n° 319209.

Dit proefschrift volgt de Ethische Code van Universiteit Leiden.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	11
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	17
CHAPTER 1. Introduction	19
1.1 Introduction	19
1.2 Aims of the study	20
1.3 Research questions	21
1.4 Research design and context	22
1.5 Significance of the study	24
1.6 Ethical considerations and limitations of the study.....	24
1.7 Main concepts and definitions used in the study	26
1.8 Overview of the chapters.....	29
CHAPTER 2. Museology and community engagement with heritage collections in Caribbean context and beyond	31
2.1 Introduction	31
2.2 Objects of wonder and evidence	31
2.3 Studies of Indigenous collections.....	33
2.4 From colonial collecting to modern museology in Europe, America, and the Caribbean	37
2.5 Communities and their connections with museum collections.....	40
2.6 The ethics of collecting, displaying, ownership, and access	46
2.7 Digital connections with heritage	49
2.8 Dominican education, Indigenous heritage, and collections.....	53
CHAPTER 3. Theoretical and methodological framework for connecting communities and Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic	57
3.1 Introduction	57
3.2 Collections and connections in the shadow of colonial thought.....	57
3.3 Critical museology for Dominican Indigenous heritage	59
3.4 Examining Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic: The methodological perspective.....	63

3.5 Methodological procedures.....	65
3.5.1 <i>Indigenous heritage collections data</i>	66
3.5.2 <i>Inventory of collections</i>	66
3.5.3 <i>Survey and interviews</i>	68
3.5.3.1 <i>Survey</i>	68
3.5.3.1.1 <i>Participation criteria for survey completion</i>	69
3.5.3.2 <i>Interviews and participants</i>	72
3.5.3.2.1 <i>Transcription of interviews</i>	77
3.5.4 <i>Participant observation</i>	78
3.5.5 <i>Documentation and archival data</i>	79
3.5.6 <i>Data processing and analysis</i>	80
3.6 Research bias and validity.....	83
3.7 Ethics and privacy	83
CHAPTER 4. Heritage issues and museums in the Dominican Republic: A diachronic perspective	85
4.1 Introduction	85
4.2 Dominican society.....	85
4.3 Cultural heritage and Indigenous heritage collections	88
4.3.1 <i>Dominican heritage legislation recounted</i>	89
4.3.2 <i>International context of Dominican heritage legislation</i>	100
4.3.3 <i>Formation of Indigenous heritage collections in a Dominican context</i>	103
4.4 Dominican heritage issues today	106
4.5 Heritage market issues in the Dominican Republic	110
CHAPTER 5. Inventory of Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic.....	115
5.1 Introduction	115
5.2 Inventory of Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic	115
5.2.1 Public museums and institutions with Indigenous heritage collections.....	116
5.2.1.1 <i>Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Antropológicas (INDIA)</i>	116

5.2.1.2 Museo Panteón Yacimiento Arqueológico de La Caleta	118
5.2.1.3 Museo del Hombre Dominicano	120
5.2.1.4 Faro a Colón.....	124
5.2.1.5 Museo del Parque Nacional Histórico y Arqueológico de Villa de La Isabela.....	125
5.2.2 Public Indigenous heritage collections today	127
5.2.2 Private museums with Indigenous heritage collections	128
5.2.2.1 Sala de Arte Prehispánico – Fundación García Arévalo	128
5.2.2.2 Museo Arqueológico Regional Altos de Chavón	129
5.2.2.3 Museo Regional de Antropología – Biblioteca de la Universidad Central del Este (UCE).....	134
5.2.2.4 Museo Dr. Aristides Estrada Torres – Biblioteca Municipal y Centro Cultural	135
5.2.2.5 Sala de Antropología Signos de Identidad – Centro Eduardo León Jimenes (Centro León)	135
5.2.2.6 Museo de Laguna Salada – Profesor Tremols.....	137
5.2.2.7 Museo Taíno César Estrella Bruzzo	138
5.3 Commercial and private display practices	140
5.3.1 Museo de Arte Taíno	141
5.3.2 Conquista Park	141
5.3.3 Museo Taíno Sabana Grande de Boyá	142
5.3.4 Museo Taíno Magua Ojo de Agua, Salcedo	142
5.4 Private Indigenous heritage collections today.....	143
CHAPTER 6. Community attitudes and access to Indigenous heritage collections	145
6.1 Introduction	145
6.2 Access and attitudes toward Indigenous heritage collections	145
6.2.1 The survey	145
6.2.1.1 Basic demographics of respondents.....	146
6.2.1.2 Provinces with Indigenous heritage collections and the types of communities that participated in the survey.....	149

6.2.1.3 <i>Visiting habits, values assigned, and access to Indigenous heritage collections by responding communities</i>	150
6.2.1.4 <i>Analysis of survey results</i>	168
6.3 Public and private concerns regarding the management of Indigenous heritage collections .	174
6.3.1 <i>The interviews</i>	174
6.3.2 <i>Analysis of interview findings</i>	190
6.4 Participant observation.....	195
6.4.1 <i>Community interaction with Indigenous heritage objects</i>	195
6.4.2 <i>Local community meetings and local community members</i>	197
CHAPTER 7. Discussion: connecting Indigenous heritage collections with communities.....	209
7.1 Introduction	209
7.2 Critical museology as a lens for Indigenous heritage collections and community connections	211
7.3 Critical community connections through improved access	216
7.3.1 <i>Access through geographical decentralization</i>	217
7.3.2 <i>Access through the documentation of objects</i>	219
7.3.3 <i>A thorny legislative path to heritage access</i>	225
7.3.4 <i>Attitudes toward access to Indigenous heritage collections</i>	229
7.4 Ways of accessing Indigenous heritage collections through multivocality and inclusiveness .	232
7.4.1 <i>Access through the establishment of institutions</i>	234
7.4.2 <i>Access through education</i>	235
7.4.3 <i>Access through displays</i>	237
7.4.4 <i>Access through the hills</i>	237
7.5 A cultural house for the contextualization of access to local Indigenous heritage	239
7.6 Integration of Indigenous heritage beyond traditional museum borders.....	241
7.7 Technology for access and protection	242
CHAPTER 8. Conclusion and way forward.....	245
8.1 Critical community connections for preserving and protecting Indigenous heritage collections	245

8.2 Indigenous heritage collections and communities in the Dominican Republic.....	248
8.3 Recommendations and implications for future research and practice	250
8.3.1 <i>The role of museums in deconstructing the remoteness of the Indigenous past</i>	251
8.3.2 <i>Critical areas of responsibility for the care and connection of Indigenous heritage collections</i>	252
8.4 Final thoughts	255
REFERENCES.....	257
APPENDICES	283
APPENDIX A Survey	283
APPENDIX B Survey target groups by location.....	291
APPENDIX C Protocols for interviews.....	293
APPENDIX D Interview questions	295
SUMMARY IN ENGLISH.....	297
NEDERLANDSE SAMENVATTING	299
RESUMEN EN ESPAÑOL	303
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	307

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1. Map with locations and numbers of public and private museums with Indigenous heritage collections open to the public per selected province. Map by Finn van der Leden, courtesy of Nexus 1492, 2020. 72
- Figure 2. Map of the Dominican Republic and the Caribbean/Central America region. Map by Finn van der Leden, courtesy of Nexus 1492, 2020. 86
- Figure 3. Administrative Regional Map of the Dominican Republic with macro-regions and political division featuring the 31 provinces and the National District. Map source: Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas de la República Dominicana, Macroregion, 2020. 87
- Figure 4. Organizational chart of the Ministry of Culture. Vice Ministry of Heritage is highlighted at the bottom left of the figure. Adapted from the Institutional Strategic Plan 2018–2021, Ministry of Culture of the Dominican Republic, 2018. 107
- Figure 5. School students performing for the scheduled October 12 celebrations, Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology, La Romana, 2014. Photo by author, 2014. 109
- Figure 6. Forgeries stored at a dealer’s house in the eastern region. Photo by author, 2014. 112
- Figure 7. Archaeological ceramic fragments mixed with forgeries on sale at a flea market in the Colonial Zone, Santo Domingo. Photo credit: Menno Hoogland, 2013. Reproduced with permission. 112
- Figure 8. Map with the locations of public and private museums with Indigenous heritage collections open to the public, per province. Map by Finn van der Leden, courtesy of Nexus 1492, 2020. 116
- Figure 9. Façade and vitrine display of the Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Antropológicas (INDIA). Photos by author, 2016. 118
- Figure 10. Map of the La Caleta Town reflecting the main excavation sites. Map source: Herrera Fritot, R. and Youmans, C. L. 1946. "La Caleta: joya arqueológica antillana." La Habana. Editorial LEX. <https://dloc.com/UF00075427/00001/1x>. 119
- Figure 11. Roofless and windowless remains of a building that was constructed to protect the Indigenous graves found at the La Caleta archaeological site. Photo by author, 2018. 120
- Figure 12. Partial list of the original 1972 inventory done as part of the documentation for objects excavated at the La Caleta archaeological site, on file at the Centro de Inventario de Bienes Culturales. Photo by author, 2016. 120
- Figure 13. Collector Samuel Pion showing Cohoba wooden idol with part of the collection on the background at his home before 1979. Photo courtesy of the Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology, 2018. 130

Figure 14. Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology’s 2013 summer camp participants learning about Indigenous hunting and food gathering practices. Photo by author. 2013.....	132
Figure 15. Students interacting with the boxes and artifacts from the Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology’s Valija Didáctica. Photo by author, 2017.....	134
Figure 16. Display vitrines of Profesor Tremols’ collection at his home in Laguna Salada. (Photo by author, 2017).	137
Figure 17. Profesor Tremols posing on the motorcycle he used on trips to locate Indigenous heritage objects. Photo by author, 2017.....	138
Figure 18. Façade and display cases Museo Taino Cesar Estrella, known by the local community as the Guanamico Museum. Photos by author, 2016.....	139
Figure 19. Gender of survey respondents. Image by author, 2018.....	147
Figure 20. Occupation of survey respondents. Image by author, 2018.	147
Figure 21. Map that shows the provinces where the survey was administered. Map by Finn van der Leden, courtesy of Nexus 1492, 2020.....	149
Figure 22. Google Earth map of the Laguna Salada municipality, Valverde Province, 2021 Google Earth Maps: https://earth.google.com/web/@19.6986551,-71.0544802,305.26970285a,22313.03262771d,35y,4.11742172h,54.91950758t,0r	196
Figure 23. Google Earth map that highlights the Paso de los Hidalgos conquest trail, Laguna Salada municipality, Valverde Province, 2021. Google Earth Maps: https://earth.google.com/web/search/Paso+de+Los+Hidalgos,+Dominican+Republic/@19.72371543,71.04323388,306.5	196
Figure 24. First meeting with local community members from El Molino, Cruce de Guayacanes, Valverde Province. 2013 Photo courtesy of Nexus 1492, 2013.	198
Figure 25 Official agenda of the event prepared by members of the local neighborhood association Junta de Vecinos El Vigilante. Photo by author, 2019. (Personal translation of the content of community agenda for the Community Day written by the board members of the Neighborhood Association El Vigilante).....	201
Figure 26. Mayor of the Laguna Salada municipality narrating the local history of the area. Photo by author, 2019.	202
Figure 27. Local poet reciting a famous Dominican poem about Indigenous chief Anacaona as part of the cultural presentations for the Community Day. Photo by author, 2019.....	203
Figure 28. Singers of the traditional chants Salves as part of the cultural presentations for the Community Day. (Photo by author, 2019).....	203

Figure 29. Community members enjoying the official presentation in El Cruce de Guayacanes of the El retumbar del Caribe Indígena documentary. Photo by author, 2019..204

Figure 30. Community members sharing childhood memories related to the types of objects found in the El Flaco and El Carril excavation sites that were exhibited as part of the cultural presentations for the Community Day. Photo by author, 2019.....205

Figure 31. Page of the first inventory for the Samuel Pion collection done by the Museo del Hombre Dominicano. Photo by author, 2015.222

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Relevant legislation related to Indigenous heritage issues in the Dominican Republic.	92
Table 2. Age range of survey respondents.....	146
Table 3 Museums visited by survey respondents.	152
Table 4. Activities performed by survey respondents during their visits to museums.	154
Table 5. Aspects of Indigenous heritage collections that survey respondents consider important. Respondents were able to select more than one option.....	155
Table 6. Aspects of Indigenous heritage collections that personally interest survey respondents.	157
Table 7. How important survey respondents consider knowledge about Indigenous heritage to be for the economy, the creation of cultural policy, and for understanding Dominican society.	158
Table 8. What survey respondents say about a visit to Indigenous heritage collections helping them understand who they are.	159
Table 9. What survey respondents say would make them better connect with Indigenous heritage collections museums under the custody of museums.	161
Table 10. Most important services museums with Indigenous heritage collections can offer to meet the needs of the community.	163
Table 11. Survey respondents' preferred way to obtain information about cultural activities.	165
Table 12. Survey respondents' use of computers.	165
Table 13. Survey respondents' access to internet.	166
Table 14. Important information to have available in digital format according to respondents.	167
Table 15. How important survey respondents think it is to have digital information about Indigenous heritage collections available free of charge.	167
Table 16. Other experiences and opinions survey respondents have regarding how the community can connect with Indigenous heritage collections.	168

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research has been made possible through the support of Prof. dr. Corinne Hofman and the Nexus 1492 ERC Synergy project. Professor Hofman granted me a scholarship from the *KNAW-Meriam Prize* for female scientists that she received from the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences in 2013. I am grateful for the opportunity to transform my professional concerns into the academic experience of a lifetime.

I want to also express my special appreciation to Dr. Mariana Françaço and Dr. Jorge Ulloa Hung for their co-supervisory support throughout the years. Dr. Menno Hoogland I thank for behind-the-scenes support, Dr. Roberto Valcárcel, for the enriching reviews and comments, Emma de Mooij and Finn van der Leden for the always supportive coordination and editorial help, Tibisay Sankatsing Nava for the reading support regarding decolonization approaches, and to Dr. Emily Mace for her questions and words with care that brought the narrative closer to home. Kristen de Joseph and Zara Ali I thank for their keen, and kind, editorial eyes. This work could not have been done without the anonymous collaboration of everyone that accepted to participate by either responding to surveys or allowing for an interview. I am grateful for their time and willingness to share their thoughts and opinions. Quiero expresar mi agradecimiento también a la Familia Torres, a Argelia, Harry, Hérico y Jonhattan por contribuir a que esta investigación fuera significativa. I would like to also thank Dominique Bluhdorn for allowing me to integrate research time as part of my museum work.

To Ernesto and Lucia, my deepest love and gratitude. They have accompanied me on this long journey with patience and understanding, for at least half of their life. Gracias también a mis madres/tías/abuelas, a mis divinos hermanos y primos, a la familia de cerca, la de lejos, y la que ya no está—de alguna forma todos han sido parte de esta aventura académica. Clenis Tavares también está incluida en mi tribu familiar, gracias amiguita. Katarina Jacobson, Jana Pešoutová, Sony Jean, Angus Martin, it has been an honor, and lots of fun, to last on this academic canoeing trip with you all. Thank you to the community of Laguna Salada and Loma de Guayacanes for their participation on this study; you are source of inspiration for making heritage connections possible now, and in the future.

CHAPTER 1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Through their collections, museums have the ability to safeguard cultural connections that can cut across generations, physical spaces, and disparate social characteristics. As rural and urban zones throughout the world have their own collecting institutions, whether, under public or private care, there are diverse opportunities for target communities to engage with and appreciate varied cultures and points of view through the heritage objects in these collections. The Caribbean is no exception to this. Museums in this culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse geographic area provide rich opportunities for understanding today's globalized world. As a multicultural region, the Caribbean serves as an arena for observing the complex cultural components of different societies and how traumatic histories have forged local and regional narratives from adaptation, resilience, and innovation. Museums, however, with their traditional top-down approaches to generating knowledge through their exhibitions, cannot create the opportunities to showcase these narratives on their own. Instead, local communities should ideally be at the heart of any such endeavor, developing a sense of connection with the cultural heritage and diversity of the Caribbean and within each of its nation-states (Jean et al. 2020; Ariese 2018; Sankatsing Nava and Hofman 2018; Siegel et al. 2013; Londoño Díaz 2019; Cummins 2004).

Globalization and open, international collaborative channels have brought about opportunities for Caribbean nations to participate in projects with international institutions to examine the history of the region, while also contributing to making local participation more dynamic. These projects adopt a revisionist focus, highlighting the role of Indigenous peoples in globalization narratives. This dissertation research has been conducted in the context of the international project Nexus 1492, funded by an ERC Synergy grant which takes a pan-regional and transdisciplinary approach. The project has brought together local Caribbean and international researchers and communities to examine one of the most painful cultural and economic transformations in human history: the conquest and colonization of the Greater and Lesser Antilles. Conquered by brute force, this geographical area became the gateway for the colonization of the Americas, laying enduring paths for a globalizing world (Hofman et al. forthcoming; Hofman, Valcárcel, and Ulloa Hung 2020; Hofman and Ulloa Hung 2019; Hofman et al. 2012,). The project examines the transformations of native societies from the time of contact, including how Indigenous heritage is perceived in Caribbean societies today

and how different nations have taken to care for its material culture as both a legacy and a living cultural force in their societies (Hofman et al. 2012)

As venues for the cultural preservation of objects collected under many different circumstances and for various motives, museums became models of cultural display in the colonized nations of the region (de Varine 2005a). In the Dominican Republic, located on an island it shares with the Republic of Haiti and where Christopher Columbus set up his first conquest base, enthusiastic collectors spent decades accumulating Indigenous heritage objects based on the model of European and American museums (Álvarez, Hofman and Françaço 2021; Prieto Vicioso 2013; Curet 2011). Founded on these collecting activities, public and private collecting institutions in the Western hemisphere began opening to the public throughout the twentieth century. As permanent exhibitions became outdated and many institutions grew stagnant in their acquisition and programming activities, public disinterest set in (Boyland 1997). Institutions with Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic followed this trend: they suffered from their reliance on strictly object-centered approaches, which have proven inadequate for connecting with younger generations and communities overall. These institutions also failed to adapt to new museological considerations that place people—not only objects—at the heart of the sustainable preservation of heritage collections (Navarro 2019; Weil 1999; 2000). Under such a museological approach, public and private collaboration can begin creating inroads for communities to connect with Indigenous heritage collections. The connections will contribute to the multivocal engagement and inclusive empowerment for communities to identify with their cultural heritage in ways that are important to them, and to contribute to increasing heritage preservation and protection in the Dominican Republic.

1.2 Aims of the study

The present research aims to explore how Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic can be connected with communities. It is argued that communities can connect with museum collections to learn about traditional knowledge systems and gain knowledge about the tangible and intangible cultural heritage through inclusive approaches. Fostering connections between heritage institutions and communities will address the need to be more inclusive in the construction of Caribbean histories (Chan 2010; Laguer Díaz 2013). Community connections can also contribute to improve preservation and protection efforts and provide insight into how communities, private collectors, and public and private

heritage managers view these connections. These connections can be achieved despite the traditional structures in Dominican museums and the passive visitation models.

A literature review revealed that the topic of Caribbean heritage collections has seldom been studied: specific research on archaeological collections in the Dominican Republic, the earliest hub of the European invasion, conquest, and colonization of the New World, has remained mostly outside the academic spotlight. The specific objectives for this study are: first, identify the scope of Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic in the context of heritage legislation and management. The second objective is to provide insight of how museums can connect with the educational, heritage, governmental, and local communities through a critical museology approach that will lead to multivocal engagement and the creation of inclusive meeting points for cultural self-determination.

These objectives can be subdivided as follows:

SO1). Determine the scope of archaeological collections in the Dominican Republic in terms of where they are located, who has custody of them, who uses them and what information about them is available to the public.

SO2). Study the influence of current heritage laws on community access to archaeological collections.

SO3). Studying the ways in which communities' access archaeological collections.

SO4). Determine the role of mapping and technology in community access and protection of Dominican indigenous heritage.

SO5). Identify strategies for connecting communities to indigenous heritage collections.

1.3 Research questions

Studies on Indigenous heritage collections in the Caribbean are scarce. Literature that specifically addresses connections between collecting institutions and communities is even more limited. To a large extent, the existing literature is descriptive and focuses on overviews of the nature of collections. None of the available studies on Indigenous heritage institutions in the Dominican Republic can attest to having improved ties with their communities. In this research context, framed within the global scope of the transdisciplinary Nexus 1492 project, furthering this underdeveloped area of study in the Dominican Republic will help contribute

to the body of knowledge on heritage management in the Caribbean and on contemporary Dominican culture.

The research questions that guide this qualitative study explore how Indigenous heritage institutions, both public and private, can facilitate community connections to their collections:

RQ1). What is the scope of archaeological collections in the Dominican Republic in terms of where they are located, who has custody of them, who uses them, and what information about them is available to the public?

RQ2). How do current Dominican heritage laws hinder or foster community access to archaeological collections?

RQ3). How do communities access Dominican Indigenous heritage collections?

RQ4). How can collection mapping and technology play a role in community access and protection of Dominican Indigenous heritage?

RQ5). What can be done to connect communities with Indigenous heritage collections?

1.4 Research design and context

The current study focuses on Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic and what communities have to say about their wishes to connect with the collecting institutions, become empowered, and aid in preservation and protection efforts. The research took place across several provinces in the eastern, central, and northwest regions of the Dominican Republic, where Indigenous heritage collections or archaeological sites are located.

Qualitative studies, such as the one employed for this research, provide strategies for researchers to detect instructive patterns in the data they collect (Creswell 2009; Bernard 2006). Furthermore, a critical museology framework was used to obtain new insights toward developing groundwork for connecting museum collections and communities (Shelton 2013). The theoretical framework for this study was developed from the review of museological literature and was used as the data collection began taking place and was analyzed.

The scarce research on Indigenous heritage collections in the Caribbean, particularly in the Dominican Republic, means that there are many aspects of the collections that can be

studied. It was considered that developing a quantitative research representative of the population would be time consuming and expensive to carry out. The design based on a random sample required a significant investment in time and resources beyond the capacity of the researcher. An exploratory qualitative approach allowed for greater flexibility in the way questions were addressed, and how data was collected. This approach worked particularly well for the purpose of administering surveys to accessible groups of people in different locations, and for conducting interviews where open-ended questions permitted more exploratory than descriptive research. Participants were asked to answer questions without having to identify themselves. All of their answers were kept confidential and discussed only in the context of data analysis for the study. The analysis and interpretation of the data generated by document review, surveys, interviews, and participant observations were an ongoing process. Although a specific period of time was set aside for data analysis once all the data would be collected, the analysis took place throughout the data collection period.

Groups of people were surveyed and interviewed as representatives of the different communities in which Indigenous heritage collections are found; these individuals were approached near Indigenous archaeological sites in different regions in the Dominican Republic. The surveys were conducted based on the availability of participants willing to complete the questionnaire; because factors of convenience limited these samples, generalizations are modest. Nevertheless, the interviews, surveys, and observations provided a greater understanding of how different communities view and access Indigenous heritage collections under public and private care.

Participant observation was employed to help document community responses to Indigenous heritage collections in an archaeological context through a series of activities that took place during the implementation of the Nexus 1492 project in the Dominican Republic, especially in the northwestern part of the country and in the capital of Santo Domingo. Since time constraints due to the researcher's full-time employment extended the data gathering period and conducting the surveys, interviews, and observations took place over five years. Nevertheless, the extended time afforded an opportunity to establish communication and repeated interactions with members of communities near archaeological sites.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study contributes to understanding the connections between Indigenous heritage institutions and communities in the Caribbean context, moving away from the tourism-oriented framework in which museum collections are marketed. It explores the nature of Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic and the creation of these collections. The study evaluates the access to the collections beyond the current tourism framework.

Museological practices that place community participation at the heart of their approach can expand an institution's capacity to carry out educational and preservation initiatives (Watson 2007). This study provides future scholars with a foundational reference to help deepen their knowledge of Indigenous heritage institutions and their role for the educational, heritage, governmental, and local communities served by museums. The research offers practical suggestions for developing and incorporating critical museology approaches to the creation of community connections with Indigenous heritage institutions in the Dominican Republic.

The present research may also assist heritage managers and public officials in improving how heritage education programs are designed to make the collections more relevant to the communities they aim to serve. Under ideal conditions, this effort would call for a unified approach at the managerial and even legislative levels. The information obtained and analyzed in this study can help in adapting various resources from different organizations' structures, budgets, and personnel capacities to facilitate access between heritage collections and communities, starting at the most basic levels. Future researchers can also use this study to identify patterns in community involvement that may further demonstrate the value of critically framing heritage institutions' efforts to improve preservation initiatives.

1.6 Ethical considerations and limitations of the study

The study did not face any particular ethical issues since there were no vulnerable persons involved as participants. Nonetheless, steps were taken to ensure ethical participation and preemptively addressed any potential ethical issues according to the standards set by the Nexus 1492 project. This entailed obtaining consent from the relevant parties at different stages during the research. As will be discussed in the methodology and presented in the appendices, oral consent was solicited before recording each interview. The survey form

included an explanation asserting that participation was voluntary and that answers would remain anonymous.

The present research is based on the voluntary participation of the survey and interview respondents. As people were approached because they were readily available, the participants' responses do not represent the Dominican population at large. A future study with a greater number of participants based on a random sample may provide more representative findings. Moreover, it is acknowledged that professional conscious and unconscious biases from active work in the museum field was likely reflected in the implementation of the research and the analysis of the data gathered.

The study's exploratory nature was based on the perspectives of the communities that participated in surveys and interviews. Its findings are not appropriate for making inferences from the data to the general population. A random and amplified study would yield a more comprehensive overview of how communities feel about Indigenous heritage collections. The research is not intended to make generalizations in the museum field because of museums' unique characteristics in the Dominican Republic and the communities that were studied.

This exploratory study has limitations due to the lack of comprehensive research on Indigenous Caribbean heritage collections, and specifically those in the Dominican Republic. Nevertheless, this research will hopefully lead to more extensive studies in the future. It is intended for the present study to serve as an initial discussion on how community connections can contribute to empower people to become involved in improving efforts to preserve and protect Indigenous heritage collections.

Like qualitative research, the present study faced limitations based on ethical concerns, the number of participants, and financial costs and time. The number of participants was not large: 22 people were interviewed, and 515 were surveyed. The research was also limited by area of work (heritage, governmental, educational), and by local geography, to obtain participation from people living in places with a museum or collection of Indigenous heritage objects or an archaeological site nearby. The local geographical focus was also selected based on the assumption that survey and interview respondents would easily accept to participate if they had a museum or archaeological site close to where they live, considering it a cultural asset in their community.

One ethical consideration taken into account during interviews was the shyness the participants might feel when confronted with an unfamiliar subject. Questions posed aimed to stimulate dialog and not to make the participants feel as if there was a “right” or “wrong” answer. However, as with all qualitative research, this study was also limited by researcher bias. Potential participants were approached in different settings and getting people to participate was sometimes easier when there were many people around. Whenever possible, notes were made on-site and immediately after collecting information in order to and reflections capture the experiences that could provide information for later analysis.

The interviews were time-consuming. The distance of potential interviewees from the geographical area of the researcher’s full-time job contributed to scheduling issues. As a last resort to get a reply from those who did respond to the request for an in-person interview, written answers to the interview questions were presented as an option.

1.7 Main concepts and definitions used in the study

The terms used in this study—those necessary to describe, interpret, and analyze the data— were selected based on the essential concepts in the relevant literature. Within the context of this study, terms used intended to describe the creation of a collection inventory, the review of archival documents, the formulation of questions for the interview and surveys, the identification of participants, and analysis and discussion:

Access. Within the context of museological discussions, access is used to refer to a flexible set of strategies, services, and communication channels employed in approaching, contacting, or using cultural heritage resources—which in this study focuses on Indigenous heritage collections.

Collections. A defined set of classified, selected, and preserved material objects assembled by an institution or person (Desvallées and Mairesse 2010).

Community. Because there is no agreement on the definition of “community” in museological literature, the Spanish Royal Academy’s definition is used for this research project as umbrella loosely defined term to mean: a group of people linked through characteristics or common interests. Based on this, and within the museum context, the term will be associated with Eilean Hooper-Greenhill’s (2007b) definition of *interpretive communities*, which are recognized “through the common repertoires and strategies used in interpretation” (78). Furthermore, the segmentation of communities based on the common

repertoires and strategies used for interpretation will be made using Rhiannon Mason's elaboration of the concept of interpretative communities (Mason 2005; Watson 2007) as defined by:

- shared historical or cultural experiences;
- specialist knowledge;
- demographic/socioeconomic factors;
- identities (national, regional, local, or as related to sexuality, disability, age, or gender);
- visiting practices; and
- by their exclusion from other communities.

Depending on the context of the discussion, it will be pointed out when the specific communities are referred, since a community's 'linking characteristics and common interests' are not necessarily exclusive of each segmented group. The common repertoires and interpretation strategies (Hopper-Greenhill 2007b; Mason 2005; Watson 2007) from one type of community, as defined above, may repeat in another type of community. For example, education community will be used to refer to researchers, teachers, and students. The heritage community will be used to mean heritage managers or administrators, as well as collectors. The governmental community will be used to mean government public officials with incidence in public affairs and legislation. Finally, local community will be used to refer to people with common values and social cohesion living near museums with Indigenous heritage collections or archaeological sites. These communities, although they have been segmented based on the type of current interaction with Indigenous heritage collections, they all have characteristics or common interests that overlap, placing respondents into different types of communities at the same time. Therefore, based on the previously listed characteristics, interviews and surveys were completed by people from the education, heritage, governmental, and local communities.

Cultural heritage. This includes "all the goods, values and symbols tangible and intangible cultures that are an expression of the Dominican nation, such as traditions, customs, and habits, as well as all goods, including those immersed in water, material and immaterial, movable and immovable, that have a special historical, artistic, aesthetic, plastic, architectural, urban interest, archaeological, environmental, ecological, linguistic, sound, musical, audiovisual, film, scientific, technological, testimonial, documentary, literary,

bibliographic, museographical, anthropological and the manifestations, products, and representations of popular culture” (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 41-00, Art. 1, paragraph. 2).

Cultural policy. The “set of operating principles, of social practices, conscious and deliberate, of administrative or budgetary management procedures, intervention or non-intervention, which must serve as the basis for the state’s action to meet certain cultural needs of the community through the optimal use of all the material and human resources available to a society at any given time” (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 41-00, Art. 1, paragraph 3).

Culture. The set of “distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of a society or social group that encompasses not only art and literature, but also lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs” (UNESCO 2001). This UNESCO definition, as a global term, is complementary to the definition of culture found in the current Dominican constitution, which was considered as a local reference in this study:

a set of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional traits that characterize human groups and that in addition to the arts and letters, they include lifestyles and ways of living together, rights value systems and symbols, traditions and beliefs, assumed by the collective consciousness as their own” (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 41-00, Art. 1, paragraph 1).

Exhibition. The display of objects in a place or container for public viewing (Desvalées and Mairesse 2010).

Indigenous heritage. Tangible and intangible cultural material created by or inherited from the native people of the Caribbean. This definition stems from the concept of “*heritagescapes*” introduced by Siegel et al. (2013, 374), which describes cultural heritage as it “relates to issues of identification, management, and conservation of heritage resources that are embedded in or reside on the landscape.” However, as Dominican museums still have old fashioned structures and are seen as existing to show and conserve objects, the present study focuses on the Indigenous heritage objects held as collections by public and private museums, and private collectors. Nevertheless, the study recognizes the importance of the intangible heritage context when studying cultural material and intangible heritage aspects of collections are undeniably related to the tangible characteristics of collections and individual objects.

Indigenous heritage collections. Sets of archaeological artifacts, created by the Indigenous population of the Caribbean that settled the region between 6,000 and 500 years ago, whose cultural legacy is still found in modern-day Indigenous practices in the Dominican Republic.

Mapping. The identification of cultural assets in a geographic area that communities can use to inform collective strategies (Duxbury, Garrett-Petts, and MacLennan 2015).

Museum. An institution that “acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity” (Desvalées and Mairesse 2010). This definition is presented in the widely used publication *Key Concepts of Museology* created by the International Council of Museums—ICOM (Desvalées and Mairesse 2010). The current definition is considered as more suitable for the purpose of this study rather than the alternative definition proposed by ICOM’S Executive Committee in 2019 for international members to vote on. The alternative definition proposed is still facing long and heated discussions without hopes for agreement in the near future. The 2010 definition is still relevant to collecting such as the ones long established in the Dominican Republic.

Museology. The study of the museum at the theoretical and managerial levels (Desvalées and Mairesse 2010).

Preservation. Acquisition, management, and conservation of material and intangible heritage (Desvalées and Mairesse 2010). In the case of the Dominican Republic, where archaeological artifacts are declared to be the property of the state, the acquisition would equate to custodial care.

1.8 Overview of the chapters

Chapter 2 identifies previous research and studies that have been done on collections of Indigenous heritage that deal with community dynamics along the same line of inquiry as this dissertation, in order to understand how museums have addressed community engagement with heritage collections.

Chapter 3 lays out the theoretical framework and methodology used in this study under the lens of critical museology.

Chapter 4 provides the developmental trajectory of the heritage legislation in the country and addresses the current state of legislative heritage affairs in the Dominican Republic.

In Chapter 5, Indigenous heritage collections are presented through an inventory based on information gathered through visits and the review of available institutional documentation.

Chapter 6 details the results of surveys, interviews, and observations conducted to learn how communities access Indigenous heritage collections in the country and the ways in which they are being managed. The findings are described, and patterns in responses both from the survey and semi-structured interviews are analyzed.

Chapter 7 discusses these findings in the context of the research questions to determine how to connect Indigenous heritage collections and communities and improve the way people engage with heritage institutions and a more inclusive care of these collections.

Lastly, conclusions are presented in Chapter 8. This chapter addresses recommendations and the way forward, hoping that these will allow public and private Indigenous heritage collecting institutions to conduct further critical analysis and determine how they can connect with communities interested in the collections' cultural knowledge. This chapter also presents suggestions for future research and a path forward for management practices related to Indigenous heritage collections and community connections in the Dominican Republic.

CHAPTER 2. Museology and community engagement with heritage collections in Caribbean context and beyond

2.1 Introduction

As the main objective of this dissertation is to identify ways of connecting communities with Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic, a literature review on the topic was the first activity of the research process. Since literature targeting this specific concern—for either the Dominican Republic or the Caribbean in general—is scarce, the present literature review takes a broader stance. It examines studies from Europe, the United States, and Latin America on Indigenous heritage objects, the evolution of museology, documentation issues, community engagement, ethics, and digital access to reveal the potential for connections between communities and Indigenous heritage collections (Ünsal 2019; Cross 2017; Kinsley 2016; Coffey et al. 2015)

This chapter also reviews the context of Dominican Indigenous heritage collections and the challenges posed by decolonial thinking. The review prompted me to realize that European and North American museological models alone are not enough to create a framework for studying how to connect communities with Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic, given its complicated colonial history. The chapter concludes with a positive evaluation of the use of critical museology as a framework to rearticulate knowledge systems and build community-based narratives that are reflective of current meanings assigned to Indigenous heritage collections.

2.2 Objects of wonder and evidence

Seeking to discover how Indigenous heritage objects have been studied, Elvira Vilches (2004) explored the ways “the discoverer’s list of wonders,” as she categorized them, acted as pieces of the puzzle in the conquest of new lands, the formation of territories, and the control of immense wealth by the Spanish crown (201–202). She linked the tendency of medieval European society to associate the exchange of goods with the “orderly collection of the gift of tribute,” as well as the association of market values with the ideas Columbus wanted to convey in writing and his presentations of the evidence of things produced in the newly found lands (Vilches 2004, 203). In her analysis of his *Diario*, she notes that Columbus “made several stops (in Spain) while *en route* to Barcelona to satisfy the crowds,” who were curious to see the natives of the lands discovered and the objects they bore (Vilches 2004, 209). Calling on the focus of spectacle, Wayne Modest (2012) also describes

Christopher Columbus's show of wonders from the discovered lands as arguably one of the first "Western collections in the Caribbean" (86). For him, the image of cultural unworthiness reflected in the literature on the encountered territories would later shape collecting practices in the region, contributing, through the type of objects acquired, to a common association of the Caribbean with nature (Modest 2012, 86–87).

While the show-and-tell role of objects from the Americas increased, documentation efforts can be seen to record less cultural data than they should. Objects with little indication of provenience, no documentation of how they were collected, no indication of who specifically made them, or how they were manufactured were placed into a general classification category. The same pattern can be appreciated in another study of influential collections of objects from the Americas, namely the ethnographic collection of Margaret of Austria (MacDonald 2002). This collection, dating from 1516, grew from Charles V's gifts of artifacts from the New World throughout the reign of different monarchies. It was displayed for important visitors and categorized based on who could see which parts of the collection (MacDonald 2002). Margaret of Austria used part of her collection as gifts to solidify alliances and demonstrate her power. The objects were not sequestered in a curiosity cabinet but blended into the palace's architecture (MacDonald 2002, 661–663). Few studies or articles on objects from the New World mention the details of objects from the Caribbean.

The inattention to object details has contributed to the sustained historical negligence of geographical recognition. General geographical descriptions were jotted down as part of lists to link the riches of a significant geographical area that conveyed the imperial power of the owners of the objects displayed. To this end, Keating and Markey (2011) examined the significance of German and Italian inventories of objects documented as "Indian" belonging to the Medici and the Habsburg royal families between the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, as both families were significant collectors of conquest items. Their inquiry revealed that objects were classified in the same way even when their origins were from regions as diverse as China, India, Japan, Africa, the Americas, and Europe (Keating and Markey 2011, 283). The authors asserted that the lists of objects were never scrutinized to determine their origin, as the inventory focus was on examining the objects to understand their economic contribution or appeal to European culture (Keating and Markey 2011, 284). The authors offer a list of reasons for the interchange in the use of inventory as a term. These included fantastic conceptions of the geographical location and political denominations of possessed lands and, at times, a lack of understanding of the use of objects (Keating and

Markey 2011). The authors also blame language barriers for the loss of the objects' meaning. In their view, wrongly categorized objects contributed to the objects' reinterpretation within a European context and to indicate what was not European. However, the miscommunication does not fully account for the cultural bias implicit in the reinterpretation of Indigenous Caribbean heritage. Precisely, object descriptions that separated what was not common or familiar—in this case, what was not considered of European nature—is perhaps a foundation for implicit cultural bias.

2.3 Studies of Indigenous collections

The Indigenous heritage collections found in the Museo de America, a major museum in Spain, are dedicated exclusively to Indigenous heritage from the New Continent. In *Imagining America*, David Lyon and Patricia Harris (1995) present the history of the collection, housed in Madrid, Spain. In a review of the collections, they note that the portrayal of both the continent and the contact and colonial periods' challenges reflect a European perspective. The authors indicate that the Museo de America has records from as early as 1572 demonstrating their interest in creating a museum of Indigenous objects. The records depict Francisco de Toledo as the person who initially suggested the idea for a museum, linking his interest in establishing a collection to the organized inventory lists of Felipe II and the King's vast collections already known by 1667. The concept of a museum with objects from the Americas is also linked to Antonio de Ulloa, who created the first Royal Cabinet of Natural History from his 1735 travels, linking it with Carlos III's royal cabinet of archaeology and ethnology (Lyon and Harris 1995). At the end of the eighteenth century, Antonio del Rio's scientific research began to reveal object research that took into account the cultural context of objects gathered abroad. According to the authors, the museum's display of Indigenous collections emphasizes Central American Mayan and Inca objects, highlighting their grandiosity and signaling this as their reason for focusing on material excavated from the continent (Lyon and Harris 1995). This focus may help explain why there has been low interest in excavations in the Caribbean. The lack of grand architectural structures and diversity of objects in the Caribbean makes it harder to argue for the allocation of limited resources to excavate and present cultural narratives. The unlevelled visual plain field of display for Caribbean objects may make it more challenging to communicate as these collections cannot be displayed beyond a justification of visual grandiosity.

In a closer panoramic view of collections from the region, the Caribbean collections of the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale University serve as references for understanding how Caribbean collections were formed on the American continent at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Peabody is one of the largest privately-owned Caribbean archaeological collections, and along with the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University, these collections have been studied by scholars with a focus on the history of Caribbean archaeology and the archaeologists who built the collection (Daros and Colten 2009; Guzman 2011). These collecting institutions have become another source of information about the archaeological context of Caribbean objects (Siegel 2009).

The history of the Caribbean archaeological collection at Yale's Peabody Museum of Natural History dates to the 1930s, and rather than focusing on objects, to a large extent, it highlights one of the most widely known archaeologists of the region: Irving Rouse. It was during his extended stays in the Caribbean and Venezuela that he began to formulate his widely known classification of ceramics, for which he highlighted the importance of the study of the object itself as a source for the study of history (Daros and Colten 2009, 51–52). Similarly, Harvard's Caribbean collection was formed from Samuel Kirkland Lothrop's work and his research in Puerto Rico between 1915 and 1917, which resulted in a preliminary pottery classification proposal for Caribbean Archaeology (Guzman 2011, 7–8). Although studies on these collections reveal the importance of the artifacts gathered through the researchers' detailed work, both museums acknowledge that there were very few scientific references to the context of the excavated objects. They do not mention how the collections were created or how they were initially displayed. This lack of information shows that even academic institutions with prestigious reputations and that focus on the work of pioneers of Caribbean archaeology neglected to value the excavated context of objects and sites while also making little connection with the local communities in which the research took place. Peter Siegel (2009) further explored the Caribbean collections at Yale's Peabody Museum, highlighting the importance of museum collections, but he also noted that the quality of recovery and curation methods is what determines the use of collections in problem-oriented research questions, not the lack of detailed contextual information (1–3). In a Caribbean context, the use of these collections for knowledge generation depends on the capacity to elaborate research projects. In the Caribbean, museum personnel do not tend to have enough capacity to support the expansion of research production academically.

With the growing concern about documentation practices on the Caribbean islands, a publication was released that may become a standard reference for helping heritage institutions explore how to improve collection documentation: the edited volume *Decolonizing the Caribbean Record: An Archives Reader*, by Bastian, Aarons, and Griffin (2018). The essays in this collection give a historical perspective on archiving and record-keeping practices in the region. The publication also analyzes the challenges faced at the institutional and governmental levels while presenting different approaches to dealing with current archival practices and issues of identity.

In a different light, reviewing a broader scope of literature helped understand how a lack of early systems for cataloging item details turned the reports of early collecting and looting practices into adventure tales that spoke of knowledge and glory in unexplored lands. The accounts of Vilches (2004), as well as those of Keating and Markey (2011), MacDonald (2002), and Daros and Colten (2009), criticize how narratives of the riches obtained on conquest expeditions made the collectors the stars of the exhibitions, rather than the items themselves or historical documents about the collections. The objects that account for a de-contextualized history of conquest and colonial times seem only to be a reference for setting the stage to present the stories of the people that gathered them. Objects obtained on conquest and colonial expeditions were therefore considered secondary data as carriers of cultural meaning by writers who recorded traveling and collecting accounts.

Janet Owen (2006) offers the relevant parallel of colonial collecting practices under British imperialism. The emphasis was on the collector or explorer, and as she acknowledges, there was little systematic structure to the collecting activities. Owen (2006) notes that natural history specimens collected in the nineteenth century were also studied in greater detail than ethnographic materials collected in the same period, and little regard was paid to their classification (14). In her study, Owen showed how the British Museum developed displays based on the organization of ethnographic material by geographical region. She indicates this was partly due to the museum wanting to satisfy its audience, which was interested in learning about exotic objects that highlighted differences with their European culture, rather than understanding the culture of their creators (Owen 2006, 14). Important expeditions often collected items based on the journey's geographical scope, what could fit in the ship, or what people were willing to give (Owen 2006, 14). Ethnographic collections served as a symbol of status and authority. Their use was transformed to justify claims of Western cultural

superiority (Owen 2006, 15–24), giving low priority to contextual information about the originating cultures of the Americas.

Based on colonial governments' different interests throughout time, the documentation regarding the contact and conquest periods is valued differently (Serna 2011). Post-contact and colonial accounts are a primary source of documentation of Indigenous history and culture in the Caribbean. Colonial documentation has been the basis for the establishment of the Caribbean scientific vision and approach. Still, the fantastic and imaginative character of Spanish chronicles has also led to the questioning of the historical reliability of these documents (Serna 2011). Mercedes Serna (2011) points out that studies in colonial libraries “show a generalized disinterest for the history of the New World.” She also highlights that some studies indicate that the lack of colonial interest was due to the Indigenous population's own disinterest and its desire to “maintain contact with European ideology and culture” (351). From 1573 onwards, the Spanish crown gave specific indications on what to document and how to structure the accounts, prescribing an official format for reporting what happened in the New World and rejecting what was not of interest or benefit to the royal government (Serna 2011). In her article “Censorship and Inquisition in the Chronicles of the Indias: Of Its Adversities and Misfortunes” (personal translation of the title), Serna (2011) indicates that the lack of rigor in documentation is a reason for the censorship of the colonial publications. However, Serna (2011) does not go into a detailed analysis of the reasons for the change in the way official accounts on the discovered lands were reported. Serna (2011) also highlights how subsequent eighteenth-century colonial documentation originated from travel accounts, as adventurers were allowed to move more freely around the different American colonies. She also points out how the travelers relied on the initial chronicles and continued to minimize the importance of reliable documentation. The spread of such information significantly contributed to the ongoing reinterpretation of Indigenous heritage objects, as ethnographic accounts are still considered a main source of information for Caribbean archaeological studies.

Considering the study of museum objects more specifically, contemporary criticism on issues of documentation regarding knowledge embedded in Indigenous objects has been made by Lindh and Haider (2010). In their analysis of texts from “internationally dominant organizations” (World Intellectual Property Organization, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the International Federation of Library Associations), they use “traditional

knowledge” to define Indigenous knowledge and make traditional knowledge part of the definition of economically disadvantaged people (9). While in the article, “knowledge” mainly refers to the Indigenous knowledge of contemporary Indigenous groups, the authors’ analysis can be applied to the knowledge embedded in archaeological objects and the lack of documentation practices regarding the cultural information that these objects usually convey. As an expression of domination, descriptions may be seen as manifestations of discursive structures (Lindh and Haider 2009, 12) that can be related to the interests of the conquest period. For the authors, acknowledging the contribution of documentation as part of an information management approach can foster a different way of learning and communicating knowledge (Lindh and Haider 2009, 13). If there is indeed a decrease in the use of colonial historical accounts as primary sources of information for documenting Indigenous heritage objects, both locally and internationally, then the understanding gained could help heritage managers reconfigure the way these objects are viewed and displayed, as well as the way communities learn from objects in museums.

2.4 From colonial collecting to modern museology in Europe, America, and the Caribbean

As in Caribbean archaeology, studies regarding Indigenous heritage collections from the Caribbean must begin with the archaeological record (Rangel Rivero 2018; Keegan and Hofman 2017; Siegel 2011; Hofman et al. 2008; Wilson 2008), the historical context of the European conquest, and the colonization process that still retains its impact on the region over 500 years later (Curet 2016; Alegria 1997). The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries witnessed the first systematic collecting approaches on the part of private collectors in Europe. They used either economic, political, or religious power to gather objects from conquests, nature, and artistic creations and make them available in specific spaces for the public to observe and admire (Delpuech 2015; Günay 2012; Keating and Markey 2011; Cabello Carro 2008, 1994, 1989; Oliver et al. 2009; Perez Linares 2008; García Arévalo 1988a; García Arévalo 1988b).

In what is acknowledged as one of the first museological treaties, Samuel Quiccheber’s 1565 *Inscriptiones* laid out the initial thematic organization of royal collections and displays of objects. The treaty provided a brief framework for the definition of museums, as well as what is today considered an early museological approach to classifying museums based on the type of collection they had and details of the founder (Kuwakino 2013; Quiccheberg et al. 2013, 23).

These early knowledge systems for cataloging collections were able to be replicated as Europe and later the United States expanded its conquered territories and colonial horizons through the Caribbean and the Americas. Over the course of centuries, officials, individual adventurers, and those interested in science took up the task of collecting manufactured items, exotic specimens of nature that they deemed of interest and any material evidence that could justify the need to control trade and the establishment of colonies (Isaac and Isaac 2016; Bennet et al. 2014; Russo 2011). These modes of collecting items from nature and from non-European cultures (ter Keurs 2009), alongside Spain's increasing commercialism and its collection practices during the nineteenth century (Mora 2013, 10), affected how collections in modern ethnographic, historical, and archaeological museums formed well into the twentieth century. During this time, collectors and institutions intended to preserve the local history of the distant past based on antiquarian archetypes of collecting (Lewis n.d.; Curet 2011). The replication of these collection practices was first documented in the United States (Lewis n.d.), and later in the Caribbean, where several of the major national museums still maintain early classificatory structures for cataloging their collections (Cummins 2004; Maréchal 1998).

In late 1930s Spain, the creation of the Museo de America reflected an emphasis on highlighting Spanish imperial sentiment. In the early 1940s, Spanish historians, anthropologists, ethnographers, and archaeologists emphasized research that reflected a nationalist identity in the museum's exhibition spaces (Betrisey Nadali 2015, 96–102). There are collectors and institutions in the Dominican Republic that still value the Spanish-centric approach to display based on a particular individual's interest in collecting heritage objects and natural specimens as it was done during the mid-1900s (participant interview, June 20, 2016; participant interview, June 21, 2016).

Regarding modern views of museums, Wayne Modest (2012) has eloquently pointed out the cultural limbo in which numerous Caribbean museums find themselves today:

[The] notions of the ancient and the modern have helped to shape early museological interest and practices in the Caribbean [...] The region has come to be defined materially primarily through its natural and not its cultural history, and thus it is represented as a place of nature and not of culture. (85)

Along with other writers, Modest speculates on how the “place of nature” label further cemented the conception of Indigenous populations as noble savages from the past for centuries to come— thereby affecting the African population, who also became seen as noble

savages, since they too were enslaved after forcibly being brought to the Caribbean (White 1985 and Edmondson 1999, in Modest 2012), and considered disposable labor for the economic development of the Europeans. The enslaved Indigenous and African populations were trapped in such a cultural void that even today, it is still hard to find them represented in material culture collections beyond the traditional conceptions of display (Modest 2012, 89).

Moving from curiosity cabinets to massive displays of objects that showed the European world the wonders of nature and different peoples from the Caribbean, museology as a discourse of power and education became well established with the advent of the prominent museums (the British Museum, the Louvre, and El Prado) created in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Despite European collecting practices being rooted in elitism and the display of new commercial wealth (Mora 2013), the desire for the diffusion of knowledge drove the creation of the first large museums in North America in the nineteenth century. Canada established the New Brunswick Museum first, in 1842, followed by the United States, with the Smithsonian in 1846, the American Museum of Natural History in 1869, and the Metropolitan Museum in 1870. In 1822, Mexico's government formally established an antiquities conservatory and a natural history cabinet while major archaeological excavations took place in the capital (Galindo y Villa 1922; Podgorny 2008, Lopes and Podgorny 2000). In a parallel manner, South America also experienced a surge in museums. Public collecting institutions that displayed cultural and natural artifacts opened their doors to the public in Argentina in 1812; Brazil, in 1818; Colombia, in 1824; Chile, in 1830; Uruguay, in 1837; and Peru, in 1891 (Lewis n.d.), while Venezuela founded its national museum in 1875 (Caballero 2001.; Lopes and Podgorny 2000).

The early academic and archaeological research criteria for registering heritage collections from the Caribbean are best reflected in Cuba. The dominant class of the Cuban plantation economy paved the way for the creation of seven museums between 1842 and the first quarter of the twentieth century, as private collectors were documented to have collected objects from the war against Spain (García Perdigon 2014, 65–66). After the 1950s, in the wake of the Cuban revolution, which bore a significant focus on education and early legislation for the protection of cultural heritage, the island began developing a framework for supporting the expansion of museum initiatives (Argaillot 2012). It is also in the history of Cuban museums that the earliest scholarship activities at Caribbean museums is found. Cuban researchers of the 1850s developed collection registries, wrote scientific articles, and carried out comparative studies of collections from Cuba and other parts of the Antillies

(Dacal Moure and Rivero de la Calle 1997). Similarly, Puerto Rico's archaeological research records date the establishment of museums there to the middle of the nineteenth century (Alegria 1997), as well as the studies done in Jamaica by researchers of the Institute of Jamaica also date the creation of museums there to the mid-nineteenth century (Howard 1956, cited in Modest 2012).

Efforts toward the establishment of a museum culture in the Caribbean can be appreciated through the implementation of systematic anthropological studies in early Cuban archaeological explorations, where materials were reported as finds, described, and preserved for further study (Hernandez Gonzalez and Maciques Sanchez 1992). Cuba has collection records that date its classification attempts to as early as the eighteenth century (Hernandez Gonzalez 1992). For the Dominican Republic, the earliest formal discussion for establishing a national museum began in 1903; the museum officially opened in 1927. The first heritage legislation called for the protection of archaeological objects by declaring them as national heritage. The language used in the legislative text signals that archaeological objects in possession of private citizens were to remain safe from the threat of state appropriation (Pina 1978). This will be further explored in Chapter 4.

2.5 Communities and their connections with museum collections

Academic reflections on traditional, modern, and old museology started in the 1970s. Duncan Cameron's critique questioned whether museums were temples or forums, as he feared museums were losing their focus (Cameron 1971; Chinnery 2012). In 1985, de Varine defined new museology as "an idea of the museum as an educational tool in the service of societal development" (de Varine 1985 cited in Hauenschild 1988). An initiative to develop a new museological approach was spearheaded by French museologists Georges Henri Rivière and Hugues de Varine, the latter having first coined the term "Ecomuseum," which enhanced the visibility of the sector's concerns in France's environmental agenda (de Varine 2014). Peter Vergo's 1989 publication on the need to create new approaches in museology served as the foundation of a new paradigm. Vergo (1989) and other authors contributed essays that sought to highlight how the field focused more on museums' methods than their purpose, allowing theoretical discussions to be neglected and preventing new museology's promotion to a recognized discipline in the humanities (Vergo 1997, 3–5).

As discussions of new museology took form in France, attempts to change how museums included the public in their activities developed around European concerns for

structure and organization, hoping to cast audiences as “actors and objects of the museum’s work” (Rivard 1984, 16 cited in Hauenschild 1988). The discussions then moved from Britain to the United States, where they were linked with previous debates on representation and politics in museums and whether or not museums should be recognized as institutions for the benefit of society (Stam 1993). The main issues examined the impact of the value assigned to objects; the re-contextualization of objects that were assigned meaning; the regulated access of audiences to collections; the politics behind the control of research and collections, and the monetary gain that collections represented (Stam 1993, 270-271). This movement became a breaking point in the perceived notion of the exclusive and object-based institution (Bennett 1995, Hooper-Greenhill 2000). Stephen Weil (1999) articulated this evolution of museum discussions in his seminal work *From Being about Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum*. In what has become known as the “paradigm shift,” Weil (1999) discussed his projections for museums shifting their focus toward educational services to the public rather than traditional collections-centered work. As Weil conceived the shift as taking place across public and private institutions (1999), it is relevant to the creation of connections between Indigenous heritage collections and communities for the purpose of contributing to heritage preservation and protection in the Caribbean. Per Weil (1999), museums that want to make themselves more attractive to visitors have to do this based on the public’s needs and interests (232–233).

UNESCO’s 1982 report on “Museums, Heritage and Cultural Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean” focused on issues of management, illicit traffic of cultural objects, economic support, and descriptive cases on the formation of cultural institutions. This became the first major document circulated internationally to provide a platform for museum professionals in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO 1982) for addressing policy issues for the region after the 1972 World Heritage Convention. At the same time, new museology discussions in Latin America found support in Néstor García Canclini’s (1990) critique of hybrid cultures and the commercialization parameters of art within his analysis of the region’s tensions between deep-rooted traditions and its desired modernity. Additionally, Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), which proposed a new pedagogical structure, placing teachers and students on an equal footing as teachers and learners, also helped contextualize the initial museum discussions regarding cultural and educational issues in Latin America. Freire’s (1970) conceptions of education contributed to further anthropological questioning where modern Western models of cultural studies were being

explored in the backdrop of education, to include Latin America's history for creating citizenship. Nevertheless, on a regional level, throughout the decades, museum discussions have remained an echo of Western issues where authors identify instances where new museology concerns are found in Latin American museums (DeCarli 2004; Navarro y Tsagaraki 2009).

Today's notion of museology encourages new communication and styles of expression (Desvallées and Mairesse 2010), wider access, and diversity of museum audiences (Stam 1993). Furthermore, it considers museums as having increased power in transforming how knowledge is produced (Ünsal 2019). Museology has also helped redefine the role of the community and hopes for a more active role for the public. Nevertheless, after more than 40 years of museological discussions, there has been no consensus on what the benefits of the new museology framework have been. Despite more structured analysis for improvement in the use of theory (Ross 2004), transformation in governmentality (Bennet 1988, 1995), and inclusion and education (Hooper-Greenhill 2000), it is still difficult to point out how effective the implementation of new museology has been for museums. The discussions have also remained centered on European and United States museums, with meager attempts in Latin America (Ariese 2018).

Exploring who could form the tenets of the heritagescape of collections housed in museums, Stylianou-Lambert (2010) studied the audience research of the past 50 years and showed how theories on the behavior and responses of museumgoers have changed. According to Stylianou-Lambert (2010), the behavior of museum visitors and their responses have fluctuated from the use of paradigms known as effects and gratification approaches, as identified by Blumler, and Katz (1974), and the incorporation and resistance models of processing information elaborated by Stuart Hall (1989; 1999), to the paradigm of spectacle/performance as identity formation in everyday life, as presented by Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998). In the museum context, for Stylianou-Lambert (2010), every audience interaction needs to consider power or resources (social, economic, cultural), audience activity, and the museum's responsibility to provide a visitor experience. Access to resources considers identifying the power relations at play in a museum visit, and museums are not always considered transformative spaces (Stylianou-Lambert 2010). An active audience does not always translate to critical reflection, and the use of technology does not guarantee that the audience interprets the message (Stylianou-Lambert 2010). According to Stylianou-Lambert (2010), the biggest challenge is to find the balance between fostering critical

thinking and responsibly supporting audience activity (141–142, also citing Sandell 2007). Finding this balance is particularly challenging in the context of Dominican Indigenous collections, as there are no visitor studies that help measure museum audience interaction.

O’Neill (2008) also explores the question of responsibility with his attempt to establish the value of museums as public goods. By analyzing various reports, the utility of museums, the role of government, expectations, preoccupations people have about museums, and democratic values, O’Neill (2008) considers that he has found the issue with defining the current role of museums in society. For him, the confusion museums have is not about their role, but more an “inability to provide a rationale for their being funded by the public, and not being able to respond to society’s interest in a democratic manner” (O’Neill 2008, 28). For him, the non-responsiveness of museums in a democratic system questions the value assigned to public goods (O’Neill 2008, 303). He attributes the continued patronage of museums to what could be considered “a tribute to the power of the objects, from which people derive satisfaction rather than because of the curator’s approach to display” (O’Neill 2008, 303).

Judging by the programs offered to visitors, Dominican museums do not follow current museum trends of not revolving around the accumulation of objects. Concerning the connections between museums and communities, the offerings Dominican public and private museums most often propose are the guided or self-guided general tours of collections. None of the museums in the country that claim Indigenous heritage collections have the capacity to radically change their displays (which in some instances have remained the same for over 30 years). The museums have staff with limited pedagogical skills to guide tours, design programs, or conduct academic research in line with their communities’ didactic needs.

Eilean Hooper-Greenhill’s (2007) analysis of objects and their role in communicating heritage can help transform the way Dominican museums with Indigenous heritage collections work with communities to move beyond mere object contemplation. Hooper-Greenhill (2007) indicates that museums today tend to present objects accompanied by associations, production actions, educational programs, and diverse uses of the space to create experiences that reflect multiples voices and perspectives. For her, the museum can provide dynamic spaces to identify its “interpretative communities,” which can be recognized by their “common frameworks of intelligibility, interpretive repertoires, knowledge, and intellectual skills” (Hooper-Greenhill 2007, 78, citing Lingborg 1988). This discussion of the modernist museum and the postmodern approach to creating a “new museum concept”

(Hooper-Greenhill 2007, 80–82), together with Peter Davis’s (2007) argument that answers can be found as to how museums and collections are exploited, provides a wider scope for exploration. Davis sees museums open to assigning new meaning to objects, or, in extreme cases, similar to the way topics can be interpreted without any reference to real objects (2007). He also points out a basis for considering narratives that go beyond the displays as an interactive option for Dominican museums to work above their modernist limitations which mostly focus on the object contemplation and not the interaction between audiences and collections (Davis 2007).

Connecting archaeology and communities, Agbe-Davies (2010) explores how archaeological research has employed the term “community” in the Caribbean and the United States by looking at several archaeological projects and the communities identified in them to determine how to make archaeological practice more inclusive. She has found that the term has been used in a scholarly context since the seventeenth century, but there is no consensus on its use. Anthropology has given the term “community” the connotation of a group having a common interest, the same geographical location, or a similar social system (Agbe-Davies 2010, 373). She highlights the fact that researchers need to recognize their subjective bias in assigning meaning to the term “community” in order to work effectively “with stakeholders of all kinds,” considering ever-changing and nonhomogeneous aspects of the community and the different ways researchers can become integrated in order to serve them well (Agbe-Davies 2010, 384–385).

Searching for discussions of community politics, engagement, and museum exhibitions, Alexandra Chan (2010) points out that “without context, an artifact is, metaphorically, mute” (174). She has studied how museum displays have isolated objects or grouped them into stylistic categories. She argues that public archaeology must empower and engage museumgoers in order for them to understand how knowledge of objects is generated and to make it more evident that the objects are cultural knowledge in themselves (Chan 2010). As Chan points out, landscapes can be “read” as maps of social relations in the past, even when the cultural systems that produced them no longer exist, and the artifacts exhibited can become information sources for decoding meaning (Chan 2010, 176–177, 181). For her, if tours can be designed to bring about critical reflection, museum audiences will become engaged by generating their own debates (Chan 2010, 187).

One particular Caribbean case touches upon a conglomerate of museum and heritage offers articulated from a governmental perspective. This systematic offer, coordinated by the Office of the Historian of the City of Havana in Cuba, was created in 1938 to preserve the architectural value of historic buildings. This action led to the establishment of a cultural institution that contributes to local development primarily through its work with the local community (Cardenas and Conde 2012). Specifically, museums serve as the central support for numerous cultural activities organized by the multiple cultural organizations that coordinate dynamic offerings in the historic city, including exhibitions, films, and conferences on identity and cultural topics (Cardenas and Conde 2012, 23). Despite challenges such as the need for greater education and professional development, as well as more observations from the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data on visitors, such cultural projects get youth and senior citizens more closely involved with museums (Cardenas and Conde 2012, 26). Through the use of school visits to museums, thematic tours, and the inclusion of recreational activities in medical care for the elderly with physical challenges or Alzheimer's disease, the interaction with museum collections has been transformed (Cardenas and Conde 2012, 24–25).

The idea of community use of museum spaces suggests the new way museums think about their audiences, and they usually associate the term with a group of people from a similar locality or who belong to the same age or ethnic group (Crooke 2010, 19). In exploring local histories, museums use interpretation strategies to examine stories, places, and collections with community members and display the results in exhibitions at local centers and museums, moving beyond stereotypes created by history (Crooke 2010). Crooke (2010) refers to the community as “the building blocks of heritage” and to heritage as “the customs, language, landscape, history, artifacts, and monuments that define a community” (17).

Another case study that examines archaeology's role in linking museum collections with their audiences is Hauptaman and Svangerg (2008). The authors analyzed three projects at the Swedish Museum of National Antiquities to explore the role of public archaeology and collection practices that could have a long-term impact on the perception of exhibited objects. In the project “Future Memories,” the museum invited the public to decide what the exhibition would consist of. For the project “Archaeologist for a Day,” visitors could take part in an excavation of the museum's central courtyard. In the “Public Contract Archaeology” program, museum staff generally not considered part of archaeological

projects became part of the implementation team. The results ranged from very personal reflections on the material exhibited, the educational possibilities designed with visitors, the public's use of collections' databases, and museum staff's engagement at different levels (Hauptaman and Svangerg 2008). The authors explained that the "way museums work with collections will structure and limit how they may engage with audiences and communities" and that those "limits and structures may only become visible if actively explored" (Hauptaman and Svangerg 2008, 256).

Regarding how public institutions have studied archaeological collections for the public's benefit, a technical brief from the Archaeology Program of the United States National Park Service concluded that staff's lack of familiarity with the objects "impedes the ability to explore the full potential of archaeological collections for outreach and education" (Moyer 2006, 1). The National Park Service (Moyer 2006) sought to identify the benefits of connecting with the public and found that archaeological collections can help visitors develop skills, increases public engagement in learning about the past, and provides valuable research materials to a range of fields. Their recommended actions include adopting the habit of identifying in publications where the collections are stored, making gray literature reports more accessible and better known as resources (Moyer 2006). The recommendations also include using existing collections to test new hypotheses; valuing and promoting collection research for graduate research; working with museums to identify the collections they curate and encouraging their use through web and print publications; and teaching and inspiring students about their stewardship responsibilities for collections (Moyer 2006).

2.6 The ethics of collecting, displaying, ownership, and access

In exploring ethics and Indigenous heritage collections, Sackler (1998) provides a generic definition of collecting while examining the underlying ethics of collecting Native American objects and their impact on intercultural relationships. The study addresses the questions of what benefits these collections yield, why people collect, and what value there is in collecting, with curiosity and accumulation tendencies topping the list of possible motives for collectors (Sackler 1998, 133–135). For Sackler, at the end of the twentieth century, museums began to be more concerned with the contextualization of the objects they held "as opposed to their long-accepted approach of positioning all objects as isolated instances of a timeless global heritage," providing more grounds for the polemic debate between contingent and intrinsic value (1998, 137). Even though Sackler's study concerns living Indigenous

cultures and their rights to have their objects repatriated, the ethical issues inherent in a decontextualized collection apply to most Dominican museums, with their under-documented archaeological collections. Sackler's study (1998), together with Chippindale and Gill's study (2000) of seven newly formed collections from the United States, Middle East, and Europe, reveals that at the start of the twentieth century, there was a common tendency for museums to amass major collections whose objects did not have much-contextualized documentation. The identification of provenance, the ownership pedigree of an art piece, has been prioritized at the expense of provenience, knowing the object's original context—making the ownership history the primary reference for the perceived value of the objects (Chippindale and Gill 2000, 467-468). Although the ethical studies reviewed do not list the reasons why decontextualization is disregarded when creating collections, the focus of the trade and curatorial practices today continue to be on objects.

At a broader level, issues of provenance, context of archaeological research, and ethics can be related to the Indigenous heritage of the Americas, as addressed by Rosemary Joyce (2013). Joyce (2013) reflects on the role of the archaeology and tourism fields in the development of narratives, in guidebooks, and guided tours of archaeological sites that simplify the original settlers' cultural complexity. Similar issues exist in museum collections in the Dominican Republic, where context cannot be established. The focus on the collector, the aesthetics of the objects, or general ethnographic considerations reflects how—as Joyce (2013) points out regarding archaeological sites in Central America— “genres are shot through with power relations of the most subtle form since they are reproduced by example, unanalyzed, inherent in how knowledge is experienced” (302). The lack of context and consideration for ethical issues can be addressed by raising awareness of the benefits the collections have yielded in the Caribbean historical spectrum while exploring collectors' motives for gathering archaeological material and the value of having extensive collections of cultural material.

Another aspect explored within the heritagescape of Indigenous collections is that of ownership. Peter Lindsay (2012) has examined issues related to the public ownership of cultural material, the debates surrounding its removal from its place and circumstances of origin, and the notion, in both legal as well as moral terms, of belonging. He established that such objects are part of a country's psychological landscape (Lindsay 2012, citing Greenfield 1995, 42), showing how objects have been used in the discourse of political manipulation and how nations have contributed to the identity debate surrounding dominance and exclusion

(Lyndsay 2012, 8–9). For him, looted heritage has been glorified, commercialized, and archived as objects of collections and status (Lyndsay 2012). He highlights that the UNESCO 1970 Convention indicates “the true value (of cultural property) can be appreciated only in relation to the fullest possible information regarding its origin, history and traditional setting” (Lindsay 2012, citing Cuno 2008, 26). Lindsay (2012) further points out that “whether they are treated as (public goods) depends on the strength of myriad political considerations” (12). As major cultural institutions with Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic were formed against the backdrop of the 1970 UNESCO Convention, decontextualized and under-documented objects were confirmed as national heritage that could be held under public or private care. Collections that opened to the public in the 1970s and 1980s displayed objects as art created by the long-gone Indigenous settlers. Public museums, as well as private collectors, were celebrated for making Indigenous art and general ethnographic knowledge available to the public, as important archaeological events in the Dominican Republic are dedicated to early archaeologists and collectors (Tavares María and García Arévalo 2003; 2005).

Learning what has been written on museums as places of cultural reflection can help improve how the Dominican Republic’s archaeological heritage is made available. Using Anthony Shelton’s (1992), analysis of public access and the use of ethnographic collections to relate to historical relationships and locality museums in the Dominican Republic with under-documented collections can use best-practice approaches to link legislation regulation. Analysis of public access can also help keep objects together in order to better illustrate economic, political, or military concepts from similar regions: “Once properly arranged, galleries can become doors that open between different worlds of thought and practices, rather than institutional confirmations of Western prejudices” (Shelton 1992, 12).

When reviewing articles to consider how museums have been perceived to connect cultural memory with a Caribbean or Dominican heritagescape, Tony Bennett’s (1998) analysis of James Clifford’s (1997) concept of contact zones becomes useful in conceiving of the museum as a scene of conversation rather than one of exhibition. Bennett analyzed how museum professionals have emphasized that instruction is supposed to be directed by the eyes because, in unstructured displays, visitors wander aimlessly, placing the mastery of the display in those that arranged it. To Bennett (1998), the inadequacy of display practices inherited from nineteenth-century knowledge-ordering conventions emphasized content and

how this content must reflect the knowledge of constituencies that have been historically neglected.

2.7 Digital connections with heritage

Museums have been integrating technology in object management since the late 1960s as pointed out by Burton Jones (2008) in “The Transformation of the Digital Museums.” For her, technology has brought about unprecedented access to collections information and has provided greater transparency for how museums care for their collections (Burton Jones 2008). With the rise of the world wide web, the spectrum of museum jobs has also expanded to include a need for increased knowledge of technological platforms in order for museums to provide services to their audiences through information technology. Object research through digital imaging and access to object documentation are only but a few of the options for connecting with heritage collections now (Burton Jones 2008). Nevertheless, digitization of collections and the digitalization of museum services does not come without complications and challenges. Intellectual property rights, connectivity, digital literacy, and cost of rapidly changing technology can be a cumbersome task for both audiences and museums and might limit access if done haphazardly (Burton Jones 2008).

As digital access has expanded, Tereza C. Scheiner (2008) has identified international entities that contribute to the development of global cultural policy, such as UNESCO’s programs, that support the identity of specific groups and to world heritage that can be linked digitally. Searching for new ways to take action, Scheiner proposed the digital space as a brief but significant stance, with multiple layers and complexity, and one that could be used for social expression on the public and private levels simultaneously. For her, virtuality can work on the social and individual levels, as well as on the particular and the collective ones with no less legitimacy than physical spaces (Scheiner 2008, 29). The recognition of virtual spaces as significant tools for the dissemination of information could help redefine the concepts of “heritage” and “museum” in order to accommodate local peculiarities in a globalized culture (Scheiner 2008, 28–30). Whatever meaning individuals and social groups assign to these two concepts can be accommodated as cultural expressions that are possible to manifest through today’s virtual social media use. For the context of the Dominican Republic, the virtual space is a physically accessible outlet for cultural expression and could be adapted by heritage museums to have people help them redefine the quality of the relationships and services they wish to establish, as pointed out by Serna (2011, 29).

The digitalization of objects can become the basis of studies that focused on community interaction with museum collections in nontraditional ways. Srinivasan et al. (2010) argue that up to the mid-twentieth century, objects in collections tended to be presented, researched, and displayed as markers of collective knowledge based on their historical treatment as scientific specimens, but that in the past decades, museums have become more conscious of showing how objects are part of social practice. The authors argue that museums can become true contact zones when “expert” communities “are empowered to articulate and state their claim to an object” (Srinivasan et al. 2010, 737). This could happen when museums make their objects available digitally for communities to access their cultural information, transforming the objects into a means to illustrate world culture and putting a spotlight on their educational role (Srinivasan et al. 2010, 742-743).

When comparing the cases of the Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology at Cambridge University, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and the Ashiwi Awan Museum and Heritage Center, the authors found that specific ideologies underpinned their documentation, each portraying objects as “complex, socially understood things” (Srinivasan et al. 2010, 744). They proposed making deeper associations of the different accounts linked to objects to become the primary focus of documentation. The authors argue that deeper associations at the heart of the curatorial practice reflect different ideologies related to the objects’ biographies, as they believe it is at the cataloging level that objects maintain their enduring identity (Srinivasan et al. 2010, 747). For them, the digitalization of objects presents an organic dimension for the proper documentation of objects, as it provides more mobility and flexibility to portray the objects’ background (Srinivasan et al. 2010). The breadth and depth of the audience’s connection with such objects may thus well depend on how their documentation is interpreted in a digital setting. Curators of Indigenous heritage objects need to take the complexities of social messages in diverse educational contexts into account.

Similarly, Vermeylen and Pilcher (2009) explored curatorial practices and online features that could help in displaying Indigenous cultural heritage which reflects the voices of Indigenous peoples. The authors identified how museums contribute to combating social inequality by incorporating the discourses and critical reflections of Indigenous peoples into their display narratives, helping address the criticism that museums only represent the colonizers’ views (Vermeylen and Pilcher 2009).

Although the considerations in the article relate to living Indigenous cultures, the emphasis on how the digital realm provides museums the opportunity to form networks from collaborative projects furthers the conversation about the multiple levels of connections that are possible. The authors caution against replicating traditional museum displays based on a Western discourse of “only one dominant perspective” (Vermeyleen and Pilcher 2009, 70), recommending the inclusion of multiple narratives. In the Caribbean context, community-based perspectives can transform the way Indigenous heritage narratives are portrayed.

In considering technology and free access to information as possible tools for changing the museums’ surroundings, Hogsden and Poulter (2012) argue that digitalization has the potential to expand the wide array of connections that can be formed between audiences and physical and digital objects. Hogsden and Poulter also use James Clifford’s (1997) concept of contact zones, which calls for the decentralization of collection information and the variegation of exhibition venues as a means of enhancing audience interaction with the knowledge the objects convey; this can contribute to creating new forms of encounters between audiences and objects (Hogsden and Poulter 2012, 187). For the authors, contact with objects beyond museum walls through such proposed digital networks can operate at the macro-outreach level (Hogsden and Poulter 2012). As with Vermeyleen and Pilcher (2009), contact zones do not have to be exclusively shaped by traditional museum displays. Communities may also play a role in defining what these zones are to help shape the modern context of Indigenous heritage discussions in the Dominican Republic.

Building on digital access to information, mapping studies of museums have proven useful to understanding access and participation in Latin America. Malena Bastias (2013) mapped the diverse museum offerings in the region, taking into account the conceptualization and implementation of cultural policy and programs based on the framework of cultural rights in Latin American museums. According to Bastias (2013), the framework accommodates the region’s varied notions of cultural rights, a difference that is due to the diversity of policies and discussions from country to country. For her, a more cohesive definition can be obtained by agreeing on clearer definitions of access and participation. She bases her proposed definitions on UNESCO’s recommendations regarding access—considered as knowledge and information management, as well as participation—the active integration in processes for the definition, recognition, and decision-making regarding cultural references and manifestations (Bastias 2013, 4, citing Farida Shaheed 2011).

Bastias's (2013) study covered museums in Colombia, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay. It contributed to mapping the tendencies of regional museums based on their contents and programs for audience development and community participation, confirming that there is a growing change in the definition of museums in Latin America and their social and cultural roles (Bastias 2013).

While searching for studies on collection management practices and the possible use of more fundamental and practical mapping techniques, the only such study that was found addressed geographic mapping as a way to expand information about objects (Traver and McKeague 2010). Traver and McKeague (2010) analyzed the Museum Artefact Geographical Interface project, which virtually reconnects museum objects with their original locations and other resources at a national level. As in most museums created during colonial times or imperial expansion, museums that held Scottish artifacts had scarce documentation, descriptions, and classification information. The project combined entries from collection catalogs, relevant excavation sites, and information from related databases.

Traver and McKeague (2010) indicated that an effective tool for reconnecting objects with their native context included records of the geographical location of archaeological materials or monuments (even ones found by chance) and partnerships with relevant institutions. The benefits of mapping the collections included obtaining information that could be used in land planning and development; heritage management; interpretation and outreach; exhibition planning; and academic and local publications, as well as quality geographical information linked to the museum objects (Traver and McKeague 2010). Some of the challenges related to mapping were time constraints and consistency, and quality of information. Nevertheless, the authors found that the digital platform permits the formation of connections with web-based mapping resources that accommodate uncertainty in the information by allowing it to be separated into layers (Traver and McKeague 2010). Both well-documented artifacts with their original location details and objects with little information in their description, organized as layers of information, can be connected to an array of information using hyperlinks to other databases that can help illuminate the object's history (Traver and McKeague 2010). Despite the time-consuming nature of the task, the case study provides a good foundation for mapping cultural material through a digital solution that can expand the frontier of object documentation and connect with a wide range of resources and relevant information, both locally and internationally. A guiding resource for cultural mapping that can be adapted by museums looking to enrich their collaboratively cultural

planning is Canada's "Cultural Mapping Toolkit" (British Columbia 2010). The toolkit was developed to serve as a model for collecting and organizing information on cultural resources and identify networks and patterns that can be used by communities in their attempts to develop cultural plans. The guidelines in the toolkit give direction on how to set up the stages of work and how to involve the local community.

Research on the use of technology for heritage access in the Dominican Republic is also uncommon. The most relevant studies found relate to the type of technology access students and teachers have in the public sector and digital literacy levels among teaching and educational management staff (Dominguez and Lara 2016; Molina 2016). Dominguez and Lara (2016) note the problematic lack of literature on the use of technology in the country and how this limits the decision-making process for educational planning; they criticize the infrastructure-based or general qualitative nature of inquiries. Their research sheds light on digital equipment, access, and internet use among sixth- through twelfth-grade students and public-school teachers, indicating that smartphones are the most common devices for accessing the digital realm (Dominguez and Lara 2016). The findings are supported in a study of the level of digital skills of teachers, subject coordinators, and school principals (Molina 2016). The study showed a tendency to have a mid-to low-level knowledge of the use of technology for teaching purposes; that didactic software is not commonly provided in schools; that poor connectivity and inadequate use of technology resources prevails; and that smartphones are frequently used as teaching equipment (Molina 2016). Any digital resource that could be introduced into the classroom to create connections with Indigenous heritage collections and improve teaching strategies remains limited to the capacity for digital implementation that educational actors have.

2.8 Dominican education, Indigenous heritage, and collections

Indigenous heritage education in the Dominican Republic has been as understudied as the collections themselves, seemingly as if one cannot happen without the other. In the Dominican Republic, curricular revisions have focused on issues of educational quality in terms of reading, writing, mathematics, and even international collaboration to develop curriculum standards due to continued poor performance in international educational evaluations (Abreu Van Grieken 2014). The public outcry for four percent of the gross national product be allocated to public education, as established by the General Law of Education (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 66-1997), reflects the

concerning issues of underfunding that the Ministry of Education faces at many levels, where heritage education is not a priority. Prior to the public protests, only half the amount of public funds had been allocated to education (Acento 2018). Although the protests proved beneficial for a higher budget allocation to the educational system, after it was raised to four percent, many educational institutions and international organizations still believe that the investment has not been effective in raising the quality of education, as a significant improvement in learning outcomes still needs to be attained (UNICEF n.d.). Abreu Van Grieken (2014) has described how both national and international interest in the quality of education arose, coinciding with UNICEF's recommendations for continued curricular revision, improved learning objectives, and continued capacity-building training for teachers (UNICEF n.d.).

It is within the context of strengthening teacher training, revising social studies curricula, and including the arts in regional curricula that Con Aguilar (2019) conducted her study on the relationships between individuals and the past in school communities in Dominica, St. Kitts, and the Dominican Republic. In the Nexus 1492 project's ambit, Con Aguilar's (2019) study analyzed discussions on education policy in the Caribbean region, such as locally in the Dominican Republic, and the representation of Indigenous heritage in the school curriculum. Through interviews, surveys, and participatory activities, the findings from the Dominican Republic attest to teachers wanting to learn from specialists and collections with a more interactive approach rather than based only on classroom materials. The study shows the importance of linking collections with student understanding and knowing the context and availability of heritage resources for the development of instructional strategies (Con Aguilar 2019, 124–126; Con Aguilar et al. 2018; Con Aguilar and Hofman 2017; Con Aguilar et al. 2017).

Other possible connections between collections and communities have been explored by Jana Pešoutová (2019) in her Nexus 1492-affiliated study within the interdisciplinary project's region-wide scope. Her research encompassed perceptions of people's health and their surrounding natural environment as these relate to cultural memories and the Indigenous past in Cuba and the Dominican Republic. Using the concept of cultural memory, Pesoutova (2019) examined how people engage with history through healing practices that incorporate the natural world and ancestral knowledge. She traced a Caribbean history of healing landscapes that incorporate ancient local knowledge along with the cultural loss that comes with land-based physical and spiritual conquest (Pešoutová 2019). The healing landscapes

identified in her study shed light on how new meaning was assigned to the local flora and landscapes in Caribbean geography (Pesoutova 2019, 141–169).

Jorge Ulloa Hung's analysis (2009) of the study and conservation of archaeological heritage in the Dominican Republic added a localized perspective to the literature review. He draws attention to the need for a multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach in the study of diverse human groups, as opposed to the Western tradition of separating natural and social sciences (Ulloa Hung 2009, 6). For him, this means moving away, to a large extent, from romantic views of Dominican identity, especially from the “aesthetic and exotic”—yet distant—traits ascribe to Indigenous peoples as represented in Dominican culture (Ulloa 2009, 7). Ulloa argues that any study or conservation of the country's archaeological heritage has to be based on more realistic objectives that take into account the diversity of its past and its present to project a more inclusive historical narrative within the different educational levels of society. As Ulloa Hung (2009) points out, this has to be both a public and private effort, especially in the educational and tourism sectors, due to the complexity and challenges of the past (10–12). Within the research framework of the present study, the cooperation between public and private entities is particularly relevant for developing connections between Indigenous heritage collections and communities.

As the literature shows, over several centuries of neglecting the detailed historical documentation of Indigenous heritage collections from the Caribbean, the objects' meanings have been lost, and the objects themselves disconnected both from their place of origin and the communities that made them. School education devotes only a little attention to the Dominican Republic's Indigenous heritage, as reflected in its limited presence in the national curriculum.

Researchers have focused on how to serve local communities and include them in their programs and outreach initiatives. Nevertheless, there is a gap in the research on Indigenous heritage collections in the Caribbean and the Dominican Republic. No known research has explored how to connect communities with Indigenous heritage collections, much less in a Dominican context. The present dissertation contributes to this knowledge gap in studying how to connect educational, heritage, governmental, and local communities with Indigenous heritage collections. These connections could become gateways for multivocal engagement and inclusive community empowerment to strengthen cultural identity and improve preservation and protection efforts.

Summary

This chapter explored how heritage collections have been studied and the ways in which museums have approached community engagement to identify patterns that may facilitate the establishment of possible community connections to Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework and methodology used to answer the research questions. The role of critical museology is explained in relation to the need to challenge reductionist historical narratives. Details on the research approach, procedures, participants, and data collection tools illustrate how the study was conducted.

CHAPTER 3. Theoretical and methodological framework for connecting communities and Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the theoretical framework approach used to study how to connect communities with Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic. The approach rests on critical museology, a theoretical orientation in current museum studies discussions that calls for a breach from authoritative, one-sided museum narratives (Lorente 2012), and which was used here as a framework for exploring connections between communities and museum collections within the Dominican cultural context. A critical museology approach also encourages us to examine how Dominican museums have contributed to the presentation of Indigenous cultures from the Caribbean as phenomena from a distant past and extinct people.

The chapter also explains the methods used in the qualitative research regarding how to connect Indigenous heritage collections with communities in the Dominican Republic. Procedures are presented, the sampling strategies used, and a description of the types of participants selected for interviews and surveys. This chapter also discusses the approach to reporting and analyzing results from the review of documents, surveys, interviews, and participant observation during community-led activities.

3.2 Collections and connections in the shadow of colonial thought

Decolonization is a well-contested process for considering a revisionist approach to heritage discussions. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) considers decolonization as the process of dismantling colonial “bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic, and psychological” power relations. For her, it is necessary to examine how history came to be accepted as a universal coherent narrative (Smith 1999, 30-31). It is in this context of decolonization that connections between communities and Indigenous and African heritage collections in the Dominican Republic can contribute to transforming the narratives of local and regional histories, eventually helping to mobilize local communities toward cultural self-determination. Nevertheless, for contesting museum narratives in the Dominican Republic, critically examining how to connect Indigenous heritage collections with communities in the Dominican Republic—as it may happen in other nations in the Caribbean—needs to be approached with care. Claims for the restitution of heritage objects taken during the conquest, under the colonial period, or even in modern times may prove difficult to sustain unless the circumstances of their acquisition are

addressed. Exploring community connections with Indigenous heritage collections for contributing to discussions of Dominican identity is necessary and should be approached by empowering local communities to engage in critical discussions and interactions with cultural heritage inside and outside museums. Such discussions may pave the way for museums to publicly address the need to reevaluate the continued colonial framework of collecting practices in the Dominican Republic and offer a way to progress toward a more inclusive narrative of the past.

Amy Lonetree (2012) proposes that museums can be conduits to examine the complex relations between museum narratives, objects, and the trauma suffered by native communities that lost everything. She shows how museums can help communities challenge stereotypical representations of native cultures while mediating discussions of historical trauma and the unresolved grief brought on by colonialism (Lonetree 2012, 5). This examination through museums can be a valuable tool in charting community connections. However, the inclusion of critical native perspectives proves difficult in the Dominican context, as there are no officially recognized living Indigenous communities in the Dominican Republic, although there is a recognized cultural movement that has reclaimed their Indigenous ancestry and helped challenge the long unquestioned extinction theories (Forte 2006). What can be adapted from Lonetree's (2012) decolonizing framework (6–8) is the connection between historical reevaluation and contemporary museum practices in a critical museology approach. Although there is no unified definition for critical museology, museum studies discussions point to the need for a deeper, more robust critical analysis of museum practice, its role in shaping the production of knowledge, and its accountability in perpetuating rigid traditional structures in institutional interaction with museum audiences (Shelton 2013; Desvallées and Mairesse 2010; Macdonald 2006; Ross 2004; Vergo 1989). In this sense, critical museology has been framed within the stances of multiple modern and contemporary critical theories (Shelton 2013).

In order for the contestation of museum narratives to have a broader influence, the decolonization of museums cannot happen outside of nation-level discussions. This is a particularly poignant discussion at the local level, as in the Dominican Republic, Spain is still colloquially referred to as the “mother country,” even when it might only promote its varied gastronomic offer (Rodriguez 2009). In the Dominican context, it is necessary for discussions of decoloniality to be rooted in the examination of coloniality and how it has framed modernity (Quijano 2000). Dominican museums have tended to present a one-sided

contemplative story—one of extermination—as art through the archaeological objects on display in museums with Indigenous heritage collections. The public trust in museum narratives has mainly been nurtured from a top-down approach. The decolonization of Indigenous heritage narratives can only be brought about through critical reflection; however, such considered approaches cannot work if museum curatorial practices dominate the deliberations (Shelton 2013).

As transmitters of knowledge, museums and their collections have been studied as places where knowledge is produced. Writers have argued that curiosity cabinets and their wondrous collections of strange items have to be looked at within the context of the epistemology of the times (Zytaruk 2011, 2). The context of collecting practice has to also be considered in the case of the Dominican Indigenous heritage collections.

3.3 Critical museology for Dominican Indigenous heritage

Learning how previous scholars have studied Indigenous heritage objects from the Caribbean has helped establish an initial framework for exploring how to connect communities with Dominican Indigenous heritage collections. A critical museology approach seemed appropriate as a strategy to examine how and why collections have been gathered out of context and what can be done to connect communities with these collections. Understanding what these connections can be will aid in preserving and protecting them, as they have long been neglected in their use as transmitters of cultural information that is still very much part of us.

The present research uses Anthony Shelton's critical museology manifesto (2013) in its theoretical and methodological approach to identifying how to make community connections with heritage collections in the Dominican Republic. Critical museology is used as an initial methodological-theoretical orientation to Indigenous research methodologies (Chilisa 2012; Smith 1999). This helped explore an academically complex and personal research topic in a country where the support for revisionist historical accounts has been withheld for generations. Indigenous research methodologies are based on postcolonial Indigenous paradigms and decolonizing strategies that aim to challenge the research process by integrating Indigenous knowledge and resisting Euro-Western thought (Chilisa 2012, 29–30; Smith 1999). Although the present research does not resist Euro-Western thought, it recognizes that it is insufficient for exploring how to connect communities with Indigenous heritage collections to protect and preserve these important cultural heritage resources in the

context of the Dominican Republic, as presented in Chapter 2. Based on what Bagele Chilisa proposes (2012), there is a need to create favorable conditions for Dominican communities—which have been historically marginalized and have accepted their history as presented through colonized narratives without ever questioning them—to reclaim the archaeological vestiges of their past and connect them with their own local narratives.

The review of studies on this topic has provided a background for understanding the heritagescape, where “tangible and immaterial vestiges of ongoing human actions [...] are linked to cultural memory” (Siegel et al. 2013, 378). The literature has further provided a context for comprehending how these vestiges are recognized in collections composed of Indigenous cultural material. Despite research on new and critical museology and Western preoccupation with ensuring audiences’ participation or engagement in a way that meets contemporary standards (Mason 2005), few studies have considered Caribbean audiences. This is especially true for examining how communities engage with museums, and even further, how communities engage with Indigenous heritage collections. Nevertheless, critical museology offers a framework through which to begin exploring the scope of Indigenous heritage collections and how educational, heritage, governmental, and local communities access or relate to collections. It also helps to identify how collections are not being accessed by these communities. Anthony Shelton’s (2013) critical museology considerations further promote the contestation of extinction narratives that broaden the disconnection between communities and Indigenous heritage collections, as is relevant to this study.

Drawing on literature from identity, display, politics, economics, interpretation, and decolonization, the framework of critical museology accommodates inquiry, questioning, and critique without depending on the exclusivity of a museographical framework, possibly laying the groundwork for a discussion of Caribbean museology. A critical museology practice supports critical engagement and interaction (Shelton 2013). The creation of an operational context for the application of critical museology in the Caribbean museum arena also calls for the identification of the museums’ audience, public, visitors, or participants. In short, it can help identify critical communities. In doing so, through a decolonial approach (Lonetree 2012; Smith 1999) critical museology is a theoretical framework that contributes to the establishment of multivocal and inclusive meeting points that connect communities and collections and engage in meaningful discussions of identity formation.

Critical museology allows for the exploration of connections and the deconstruction of colonial narratives, challenging museums to consider how their collections can provide communities with opportunities to redefine how their past is presented and how it can make sense to them. In looking at how to frame a model for Caribbean museums, Anthony Shelton's manifesto offers a more structured reference on critical museology. Based on Tony Bennett's (1995) and Néstor García Canclini's (1990) works regarding power and economic relations with heritage and social identity, Shelton differentiates his critical museology from new museology, to which he ascribes a lack of definition or method:

As a field of study, [critical museology] interrogates the imaginaries, narratives, discourses, agencies, visual and optical regimes, and their articulations and integrations within diverse organizational structures that taken together constitutes a field of cultural and artistic production, articulated through public and private museums; heritage sites; gardens; memorials; exhibition halls; cultural centers; and art galleries (Shelton 2013, 8).

This framework serves as a foundation for exploring many aspects of Caribbean museology. Beginning with the epistemological steps that may guide Caribbean museums as departing strategies, Shelton (2013) proposes to place all museum narratives under skeptical scrutiny. He encourages readers to de-objectivize reductionist historical narratives to focus on understanding the assemblage of collections. Shelton (2013) also asks to consider more subjective knowledge in assigning meaning that is not only based on a traditional curatorial mediation in order to become disruptive of reality (9-13). Scrutinizing the heritage narratives in the assemblage of Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic is necessary to begin questioning how museums have contributed to the perpetuation of Indigenous extension in the Caribbean. Examining museum narratives that are, to a large extent, based on colonial narratives could be a disruptive act.

The identification of studies about how the museological arena has addressed discussions regarding Indigenous heritage collections is necessary to understand why the topic has been understudied. The available literature only sheds a dim light on strategies to enhance the participation and involvement of communities in creating connections with the cultural knowledge of Caribbean collections. Previous collaborative projects in Latin America have used community outreach to revitalize ethnographic collections pertaining to originating cultures. These projects could be a reflexive reference for the Caribbean. For example, the "Sharing Knowledge" web platform (humboldt-lab.de) was developed as a pilot collaboration between the Ethnology Museum of Berlin and the National Experimental

Indigenous University of Tauca in Venezuela. It helped reinterpret objects via decolonizing approaches (Scholz 2018). Through a database, Indigenous community members and museum staff could exchange knowledge regarding objects, which provided an understanding of how ethnic groups in Venezuela see these artifacts vis-à-vis how museums tend to classify them in collections.

Another study on youth engagement in Caribbean museums points out examples of initiatives that have involved outreach and different ways of facilitating and creating community exhibitions (Ariese 2018). In the study's coverage of the Dominican Republic, one of the highlighted examples is the Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology, the museum the researcher managed for 19 years. The institution developed a traveling unit that it loaned to schools that could not visit the collection. Ariese (2018) recognized this as an increasingly common practice for Caribbean museums in "renegotiating the museum's position of power and facilitating engagement on a more equal basis" (14). The Barbados Museum & Historical Society found that co-creating exhibitions with youth (by involving them in all levels of exhibition production) gave them a sense of curatorial responsibility, which resulted in more consistent participation engagement (Ariese 2018, 14). Both of these examples involve the examination of identity through exhibitions and community engagement.

Considering heritage as "a form of cultural memory and identification that shifts as societal values and stakeholders change" (Siegel et al. 2013, 376–377), Dominican public and private museums, as well as holders of undocumented Indigenous heritage collections, can work toward the incorporation of heritage values into contemporary Caribbean society. These values provide a basis for higher standards in conservation and respect for the past. Likewise, museums can pinpoint how communities can design their own ways of interacting with material culture and the cultural knowledge embedded in these objects. The multidisciplinary study of individual objects, collections, and heritage activities is a tool that may help foster critical thinking in the Dominican Republic and the rest of the Caribbean with regard to heritage practices and improving how Indigenous history is taught, appreciated, and reflected in cultural practices.

3.4 Examining Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic: The methodological perspective

As caretakers of the cultural materials produced by the Indigenous people of the Caribbean, Dominican museums are responsible for connecting the safeguarded objects in both public and private custody with the different communities that are interested in learning about the past. To identify possible connections and better serve the cultural needs of those seeking to understand the Indigenous history of the country in a more complete manner, public and private institutions that display Indigenous heritage items need to improve the documentation of their collections. However, determining the provenience of Indigenous heritage objects in the Caribbean is often difficult. The subpar excavation practices of the past, undocumented private purchases or acquisitions, and emphasis on the aesthetic characteristics of objects are just a few reasons why the development of systematic registration methods for Indigenous heritage collections has been hindered. Improving the documentation of objects and making connections possible has to be a priority in order to better understand the collections. Gaining a better understanding of Indigenous heritage through objects can also help address overdue discussions of decolonization that have been absent in museum narratives (de Varine 2005b). A more systematic approach to exploring Indigenous heritage collections can help audiences understand the contemporary meaning of these objects in Dominican society. Tracing the history of public and private collections of Indigenous heritage through a critical examination of museum narratives is a starting point in understanding how communities can connect with these collections.

For a critical museology methodological approach, Anthony Shelton (2013) maps the need to identify all possible agency relations and initiatives that depend on culturally based collaborations. He pushes for deconstruction and reflexivity in order to develop fresh insights. Shelton urges experts to stop making a distinction between museography and museology—as the visual application of knowledge cannot be separated from interpretative methods—and to distinguish fields of work and identify the interactions and influences that bind museums in multiple networks (Shelton 2013, 13–15). Shelton (2013) also emphasizes the need to critically assess the institutionalization of collections for their political implications. He finds the incorporation and sustainment of a deconstructive attitude crucial to ensure critical practices and maintain reflexive dialogs (16–19). Lastly, he highlights the recognition of networks as important hubs that, both at the virtual and physical levels, “connect museums, communities, funding, and political sources, providing access to

collections and archives and conduits for critical engagement” (Shelton 2013, 19). For Dominican Indigenous heritage collections, the identification of such networks could force public and private museums, collectors, and public officials to examine their role in the improvement of educational programs, as well as in the heritage market.

Critical museology provides a methodological opportunity for Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic to transform their current structures in line with Alissandra Cummins’s (2004) suggestion: “(Caribbean) Museums as sites of questioning should identify ways to allow the community to engage more directly in the construction of national (or local) histories through interactivity and the elimination of boundaries and control” (240). The scrutiny of narratives by Dominican communities may reveal more opportunities to connect with Indigenous heritage collections than any curatorial effort could under the current model of community engagement.

The severity of the cultural rupture caused by European colonization and the lack of context for most Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic have caused a profound disconnect between the various communities and cultural objects in public and private care. These collections are, to a large extent, the byproducts of the extended looting of the archaeological sites in which the objects were found. Once housed in a museum, the collections are often presented as the remains of an extinct and remote culture. Dominican museums with Indigenous heritage collections have failed to update their exhibition methods and have maintained exhibition displays based on classificatory research, perpetuating notions of the past as a far-removed phenomenon. This failure has further contributed to the collections’ disconnect with educational, heritage, governmental, and local communities, limiting access to the cultural information that the objects can convey.

This research is a basic qualitative study, constructed through interacting with people, soliciting interpretations of their experiences, and analyzing any significance these experiences may convey (Merriam and Tisdell 2016, 23–24). The study’s qualitative nature helped address cultural descriptions, subjective understandings, and interpretations (Marshall and Rossman 2006). The study also explored concerns regarding access and management issues that tend to challenge Dominican institutions from only focusing on collections’ meanings and context (Merriam and Tisdell 2016, 2). This qualitative panorama was formed with data from questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and a review of historical documentation and articles related to the care of Indigenous heritage

collections in the Dominican Republic. The qualitative research study illuminated how communities interact with public and private Indigenous heritage collections, raise awareness of these collections' historical value, and protect and preserve them for future generations.

Dominican Indigenous heritage is associated with objects left behind by long-gone original inhabitants, and that can only be viewed in museums. Critical museology helps to explore ways of connecting communities with Indigenous heritage collections and archaeological sites that are still found throughout the country. It also helps in examining how objects from the Caribbean are displayed and categorized for the general public. This framework aids in decoding the meaning and value communities assign to the types of cultural material displayed and how these have been represented in the Dominican Republic. Although intangible heritage aspects associated to Indigenous heritage collections is outside of the scope of this the research, it is important to recognize that it is a crucial steppingstone for larger discussions that address wider connections to the spiritual, healing, and cultural traditional knowledge practices. This topic was explored extensively as part of the Nexus 1492 research by Jana Pešoutová (2019) titled *Indigenous Ancestors and Healing Landscapes: Cultural Memory and Intercultural Communication*, carried out in Cuba and Dominican Republic.

3.5 Methodological procedures

The research design has been depicted as a map “because it helps us understand some elements of reality that we need to understand” (Maggetti et al. 2013, 8). In other words, the design of a research study may be conceived as a roadmap that helps to identify what can be the best ways to collect information to arrive at a solution. The research roadmap began with a literature review to learn what previous studies had been made regarding the study of Indigenous heritage of the Caribbean and the Dominican Republic. The review of previous studies and museological theories helped in selecting critical museology as the most appropriate theoretical framework to approach the exploration of connections and Indigenous heritage collections within the educational, heritage, governmental, and educational communities in the country.

Qualitative research analyzes information from various settings and in multiple forms that relate to human behavior, communication, and surroundings (Berkwits and Inui 1998). Detailed descriptions and approaches that seek to interpret context from multiple perspectives permit the use of qualitative analysis (Geertz 1983). Analyzing how members from the

educational, heritage, governmental, and local communities interact with collections, how they value them, and how these collections are cared for are some practical ways in which connections can be mapped.

The techniques used in this research were based on qualitative design. Qualitative techniques are used to explore collected data in order to yield clear patterns and relationships (Byrne 2002). For the research, this was achieved by gathering information from previous academic research, institutional documents, from people involved in the management or care of heritage collections, and from individuals who do and do not visit private and public museums. The numerical data obtained from the surveys were also used for qualitative interpretation. The study helped create an inventory of national collections, and the analysis of surveys and interviews helped identify the types of access to collections communities might want to have. As part of this qualitative research approach, observations were made on how a local community near an archaeological site develops connections with excavated objects; more specifically, the interaction within the scientific context of an archaeological excavation conducted were observed as a part of the Nexus 1492 project team at two sites in close proximity to each other in the northwest part of the Dominican Republic (Hofman et al. forthcoming). The inquiry aimed at answering the research questions formulated in Chapter 1.

3.5.1 Indigenous heritage collections data

The data collection process began by gathering existing information on Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic under either public or private custody. This part of the process aided in understanding the scope of the collections, their main characteristics, and what type of information about them that was available to the public. It contributed to assessing the country's public and private collections in terms of where they are located, how they are managed, and the composition of the collections. The limited materials and information available for most collections further helped me to formulate the questions for the surveys and interviews conducted in the second phase of the research process.

3.5.2 Inventory of collections

The inventory of public and private collections compiled was used to outline the past and present state of archaeological collections, tracing how the collections were gathered, how they came to be open to the public, and how they are currently being managed. To identify

the scope of Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic, the following characteristics for museums or collections, currently or previously open to the public, with at least 200 Indigenous heritage objects on display were identified:

- geographical location and relation to archaeological sites;
- types of collections, documentation, and archival materials;
- types of activities, programs, and services offered to the public; and
- how information about the collection is made available to the public.

The inventory of collections also assimilated details from written materials developed by the institutions or individuals managing the collections. The materials included brochures, publications with details of the collections, and online texts; these aided in the analysis of how the collections described themselves and what type of information about them was available to the public. This stage of the research intended to develop an inventory of public and private archaeological collections and sites as cultural resources. The collections were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to determine the level of access to heritage material by communities in the local and regional vicinity and explore how the information could be used as a starting point for mapping collections and sites. Cultural mapping refers to gathering information about cultural resources to learn what is available in a specific community (Legacies Now 2010). Specific communities for the present study mean educational, heritage, governmental, and local communities. Adapting models for cultural mapping for these purposes helped identify collections' resources on Indigenous Caribbean heritage throughout the Dominican Republic. Having access to such an inventory of collections, visual map, and list of cultural assets available by geographical area, educational, heritage, governmental, and local communities will have greater information available to pique their interest in learning about and enriching their interaction with Indigenous heritage collections and sites.

Opinions of members of various communities were also gathered regarding the value attributed to Indigenous heritage collections and archaeological sites. As indicated in Chapter 1, the members of the communities consulted for this study refer to people belonging to the education, heritage, governmental, and local communities. They were selected based on shared characteristics and common interests, or common repertoires and interpretation strategies (Hopper-Greenhill 2007b; Mason 2005; Watson 2007), and their proximity to Indigenous heritage collections.

The information gathered helped create an asset map of diverse geographical areas to understand how each collection is used. The mapping of collections also raised awareness about the conservation status of known archaeological sites, creating a visual framework for analysis.

3.5.3 Survey and interviews

Survey and interview data were collected at the same time. The purpose of the survey and interviews was to obtain a general and basic overview of how various communities access Indigenous heritage collections, their opinions on whether these collections are seen as serving to understand the Indigenous history, and how people in different provinces relate to collections across. Participant observation allowed me to see local community members interacting with information generated by the Nexus 1492 project regarding Indigenous heritage objects excavated in their area.

3.5.3.1 Survey

Surveys are helpful for obtaining information from large groups in a relatively short time frame (Bernard 2006). The survey was administered in order to study the attitude members of the various communities have toward Indigenous heritage collections and museums. The survey also provided insight to how these communities were accessing heritage collections, and how mapping techniques could play a role in facilitating access to collections, identity formation, and increase the protection of Indigenous Dominican heritage. It seemed most appropriate to conduct this type of survey in person in the different provinces where it was hoped to obtain information from the local communities. Survey administration is uncommon in the Dominican Republic. There was a possibility that people might not be able to provide information if the survey were administered by phone or submitted by mail and they declined to complete it. Conducting the survey face-to-face also allowed me to clarify the question when a participant did not understand a point; further, it permitted self-administration of the survey when participants expressed that they would prefer to fill it out themselves instead of having the survey administrator read each question. Even though these types of surveys might be considered intrusive (Bernard 2006), in this study, face-to-face administration of the questionnaire also allowed me to obtain information from participants even if they indicated that they could not complete it if they were required to read the questions.

The survey aimed at formulating a more complete picture of the status of access to

Indigenous collections by members of the educational, heritage, governmental, and local communities. Through the survey, it was also hoped to assess the need to improve current and long-term access to collections according to the groups surveyed. The answers permitted the distribution of some characteristics of the people who visit or interact with Indigenous heritage collections and those who do not. The fixed-choice format was utilized frequently throughout the questionnaire to motivate those who voluntarily completed it to answer as many questions as possible.

The questionnaire, which included both closed and open-ended questions, inquired about the frequency of each participant's visits to Indigenous heritage collections, the motivations for their visits, what they find important about the collections, and the types of interactions they have with the collections. The combination of closed- and open-ended questions gave participants some flexibility in expressing themselves on certain topics of inquiry. The questionnaire format allowed me to ask a long battery of questions that might otherwise be considered tedious during an interview and cause participants to lose interest (Bernard 2006).

The survey was comprised of 24 questions to determine respondents' attitudes regarding Indigenous heritage collections, collection access, and the use of technology. The questions were divided into four categories:

- a) the participant's visiting habits;
- b) the nature of the participant's interest in Indigenous heritage collections and the meanings and values the participant assigns to them;
- c) how the participant uses Indigenous heritage collections and what information he or she seeks from them;
- d) the participant's use of technology; and
- d) the participant's basic demographic information.

3.5.3.1.1 Participation criteria for survey completion

Participants for the survey were intentionally selected for convenience due to the limitations of time and funding. Convenience sampling—i.e., “whoever will stand still long enough to answer your questions” (Bernard 2006, 191)—was a major source of respondents. The survey was originally intended to be conducted in a higher number of provinces, but due

to time constraints and geographic distance, the provinces where surveys were administered included those with collections open to the public and archaeological sites, as well as the main site of research for the Nexus 1492 project. The researcher worked with the assumption that people would be more willing to answer survey questions or participate in an interview if they were within a locality that had a known Indigenous heritage collection or archaeological site.

The study is considered a first step toward establishing connections with members of the educational, heritage, governmental, and local communities, and the Indigenous heritage collection in their geographical area, to make of these collections more inclusive cultural meeting points. Instead of a stakeholder analysis, the survey sought to identify how respondents use collections and how they think connections can be made.

Public school teachers participating in the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo's Certificate Program on Art and Folklore at the La Romana Campus were surveyed, in an effort coordinated by the anthropology class instructor and the campus director. Tourism students from the Cap Cana Campus of the Universidad Iberoamericana in La Altagracia province were also able to complete the survey through the coordinated efforts of the campus's executive director. Art students from Chavón's School of Design in La Romana Province filled out the survey with the permission of the Vice-Rector of the School and the Dean of Students. Students enrolled in different areas of study at the Universidad Católica de Santo Domingo who participated in a special tour of the Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology for an anthropology class completed the survey thanks to the coordination of the university instructors who accompanied the students on the museum field trip. Responses were obtained from a few local archaeologists, members of the local press, artists, art teachers, and university professors. Cooperation of some participants were secure by circulating the printed survey at professional meetings regularly attended regarding museum collaborations.

The largest museum audience in the country comes from the school system and regularly use the museum as part of school excursions. For this reason, schoolteachers, high school students, and university students were considered the main respondents from provinces with Indigenous heritage collections and well-known archaeological sites. Although the bias that comes with the use of convenience samples is acknowledged, it was useful to identify and understand what connections could be developed through the opinions

of members of the educational community that visit museums on a regular basis as part of school excursions.

All survey participants were informed of the nature of the research, that participation was on a voluntary basis, and that their responses were anonymous. The individual survey responses have been recorded anonymously and data has been stored at Leiden University's research repository associated with the project Nexus 1492 in accordance with the ethical guidelines established by the University as well as by the European granting institution.

Due to geographic distance and time constraints, two additional people were enlisted to help administer the survey in order to reach more people. In the northwest of the Dominican Republic, Jonnathan García, a local community member that had worked with the Nexus 1492 project in Valverde Province, helped administer the survey in schools and to people on the street in order to reach a more diverse set of respondents from communities near local museums or heritage sites. In La Romana Province, Rafael Serrano, a resident of the town of La Romana who was familiar with the research project, also solicited people on the street to complete the surveys. This permitted the collection of data from participants beyond those who were visiting or in proximity to the Regional Museum in Altos de Chavón, which is about 15 kilometers away from the La Romana city center. A stipend was provided to both of the community members who helped administer the surveys in schools and town centers. The stipend covered local transportation and the cost of mobile phone communication to coordinate with schools or teachers when they could visit to administer the surveys. It also helped pay for any snacks in case the administration of the surveys took longer than two hours at any given location.

As previously stated, convenience or purposive samples—people selected because they were conveniently or purposely accessible to ask if participation was possible (Bernard 2006; Cresswell 2009) were selected. The convenience criteria were based on their location with respect to either the Nexus 1492 project's main geographic area of study or to provinces with an Indigenous heritage collection open to the public and an archaeological site nearby, as indicated in Figure 1.

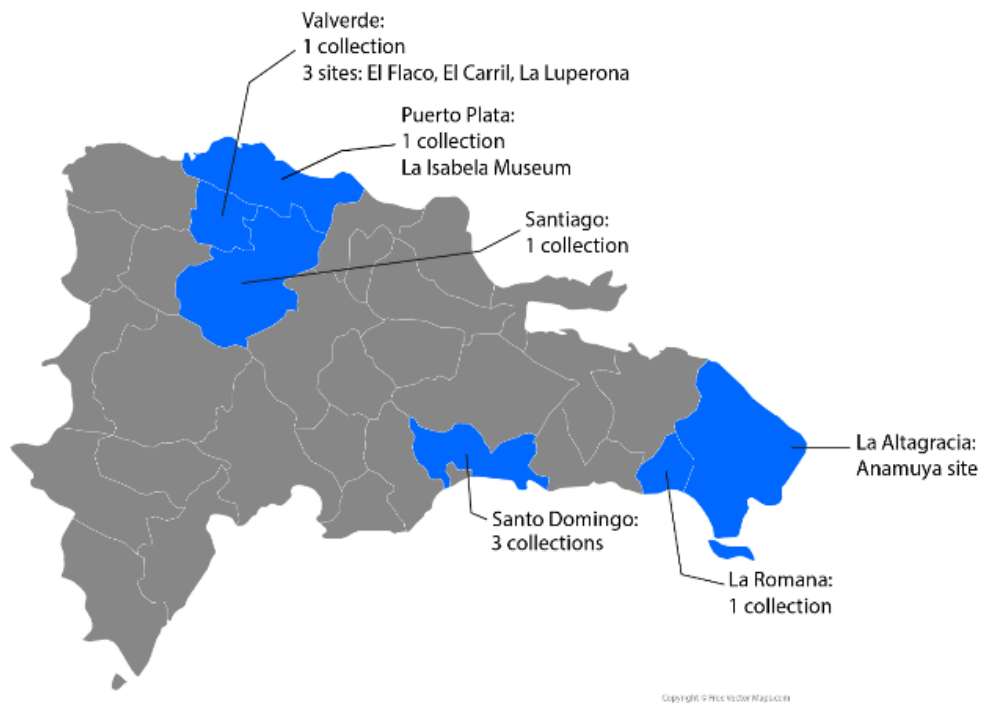


Figure 1. Map with locations and numbers of public and private museums with Indigenous heritage collections open to the public per selected province. Map by Finn van der Leden, courtesy of Nexus 1492, 2020.

- Santo Domingo National District, with Indigenous heritage collections at the Museo del Hombre Dominicano and Sala de Arte Prehispánico, and an exhibition at the Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Antropológicas at the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo;
- La Altagracia, Higüey, with archaeological sites in Anamuya and Cotubanamá National Park;
- La Romana, with the Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology;
- Puerto Plata, with Parque Nacional y Museo La Isabela (Museum and National Park) and Museo Taíno Dr. Cesar Estrella;
- Santiago, with the Centro Eduardo León Jimenes collection; and
- Valverde, Mao, with the Nexus 1492 project’s active excavation sites.

3.5.3.2 Interviews and participants

Qualitative studies that incorporate interviews as part of their data collection strategy are able to profit from conversations with participants; these tend to be based on open-ended questions that the researcher poses to the interviewees. These conversations generate new information and contribute to understanding the meaning of the participants’ opinions and

views regarding the topic of inquiry (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009, 229).

The present research employed semi-structured interviews. Conducting interviews requires that questions be formulated beforehand to help the interviewer steer the direction of the discussion. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allows for deeper explorations of the participants' answers (Creswell 2009). Even when a follow-up interview is not needed, the initial interview offered opportunities to further probe for insights on particular issues (Bernard 2006).

The interviews for this study allowed public officials, heritage managers, and collectors to anonymously express their opinions regarding heritage legislation, management, and public access to Indigenous heritage collections. Anonymity and confidentiality were provisions established in the interview protocol to allow participants a greater sense of security in expressing themselves in the interviews (Bernard 2006). Such an assurance of anonymity and confidentiality helped to allow strong sentiments to surface in the interview questions' documented responses. Further, anonymity was an important part of the interview protocol as there is a widespread concern over repercussions—such as retaliation or ouster—for open criticism on the part of public officials in politically assigned posts or well-known heritage personalities or sponsors. These concerns have been present in the heritage field for years as behind-the-scenes anecdotes among heritage professionals; colleagues share information of the care one must take when criticizing the conditions of museums or archaeological sites or heritage-related events. Therefore, to protect their confidentiality during the transcription and analysis of the interviews, numbers were assigned to each participant and only their field of work was noted. Information that could identify the participants was withheld when reporting the results of the current study. As part of the ethical and data security standards implemented for all Nexus 1492 projects, confidential information is safely stored in Nexus data repository at Leiden University.

National census data—which could provide useful details for determining which segments of the population could help identify communities to be surveyed for the research inquiry—is challenging to access. Therefore, a study based on random selection was not deemed feasible. Purposive sampling groups were considered for the questionnaires in order to facilitate the recollection of information and reduce time and costs. In purposive sampling, “you decide the purpose you want informants to serve, and you go out to find some” (Bernard 2006, 190). Part of the research depended on inquiring what legal and regulatory knowledge

heritage managers and collection owners have. It was necessary to identify key people in heritage management positions who were willing to answer questions regarding implementing and monitoring public policy for the care of heritage collections. Semi-structured interviews with heritage managers and collectors helped me gather knowledge about heritage legislation and how collections are currently accessed. Because in-depth research on sensitive topics requires nonprobability sampling, interviewees and survey respondents were selected on purpose and for convenience, not randomly.

The same steps were taken to contact potential interviewees in order to maintain consistency of contact and in the participation process:

1. A list was created to identify all potential interviewees.
2. The most effective method of contact was determined in order to yield the fastest possible confirmation: electronic mail, phone call, or visit.
3. Contact was made on a weekly basis to allow enough opportunity to schedule interview times for those who agreed to participate.
4. Responses were systematically tracked on a weekly basis to determine when to move on to the second method of contact as a follow-up when no response was received.
5. The interview protocol was read aloud to confirm the participant's oral consent, and the recording of the interviews began with this review of the protocol.

Interviews with members of local communities and representatives of public and private heritage institutions helped determine the value assigned to objects in collections and sites and the ease of access to collections and activities necessary to engage them with these collections. Interview participants were asked to cooperate with the research by agreeing to voluntarily provide answers. The pool of interviewees was limited to heritage managers in the private sector, public officials in posts related to the Ministry of Culture of the Dominican Republic, and private citizens with an archaeological collection of Indigenous heritage (collectors with at least one major Indigenous object of wood, ceramic, or stone), whether it was accessible to the public. The categories of participants were specified as follows:

- public heritage officials with a current or former post in a governmental position;
- heritage managers;
- private collectors with collections open to the public; and
- private collectors with collections closed to the public.

As the field of heritage is relatively small in the Dominican Republic, public officials, heritage managers, heritage workers, and private collectors tend to know one another. Throughout the study, any information that might facilitate the recognition of any opinions the participants have expressed in confidence regarding the positions they hold or any particular person they might have criticized was omitted.

Interviewees selected from among a pool of professional contacts which included heritage managers and collectors that were familiar to the researcher due to her 19-year tenure as director of an archaeological museum and collaboration in multiple public sectors, private, and nonprofit cultural and educational projects in the Dominican Republic. The government-related participants held posts in museums, public archival institutions, provincial cultural offices, heritage legislation assessment, and education. They work (or worked) at different levels within the Ministry of Culture. Potential participants or their assistants were contacted personally by the researcher via phone and through electronic communication to request and coordinate meeting times to conduct the interviews. A list of interview participants was prepared and included their area of heritage work but do not attach it in order to keep the confidentiality of their answers.

The interviewees were solicited to participate voluntarily; they responded to a set of pre-determined questions and consented to have their interviews recorded for transcription purposes. Authorization to record via oral consent at the start of each interview was obtained, as reflected in the interview protocol shown in Appendix A. The interview protocol was designed with questions specially tailored to each of the different groups of interviewees.

For those who could not be interviewed in person due to scheduling conflicts, the researcher asked them to submit their answers in written form and via electronic communication. The list of participants served to keep track of who had sent written responses since some of them did not reply to an in-person interview. Participation reservation was probably due to the participant's public or private sector involvement in the management of museums or heritage collections. For these participants, the same interview protocol and questions was used as for the in-person interviews, with a modification to indicate their agreement to voluntarily submit the questions in writing.

The interview questions asked information from people involved with the care of Indigenous heritage collections or those associated with heritage policy or management

development. For public officials and heritage managers, the questions collected information in the following categories:

- information on the participant's professional background;
- their opinions on heritage legislation; and
- their ideas for accessing heritage collections.

For private collectors, the categories of inquiry related to:

- their personal reasons for collecting;
- their opinion of heritage legislation; and
- ideas for accessing heritage collections.

An interview script was drafted in order to maintain uniformity in the execution of the interview (Bernard 2006, 212). The in-person interview process began in May 2015 and continued until December 2017. Follow-up solicitations for interview participation continued until 2018, allowing for the submission of written responses by those who declined the request for an in-person interview.

Telephone calls were made to encourage people to accept doing face-to-face interviews. Phone calls helped guarantee in-person meetings and minimized the possibility of people asking to receive the questions in advance by email or to answer them in writing.

After the interview times had been scheduled, basic information was gathered regarding the interviewee's background to facilitate the initial conversation. In general, the interviews lasted 20 minutes, but in a few cases, the interviews lasted between one and a half to three hours. Interviews were carried out in person in the Santo Domingo National District, Valverde Province, and La Romana Province, and the interview questions were sent via email to those who preferred to respond in writing.

In-person interviews were recorded using an internal smartphone microphone and a voice recording application. Interviews took place in single sessions. No interview was conducted without a recorded verbal confirmation of the participant's consent. The interviews transcribed yielded approximately 95 transcribed pages for 11 in-person interviews. There were 35 pages of answers submitted in writing from the participants who sent their responses via email.

Requests for interviews were followed up between January 2017 and June 2019. After numerous attempts to contact prospective interviewees, messages were sent to ask about their willingness to submit the interview answers in writing. The possibility to submit written answers was offered as a last resort but elicited a positive response from most prospective interviewees.

Distance, cost, and time proved to be the main difficulties in setting up an efficient interview schedule. The interviews had to be plan around the full-time work schedule of the researcher. The most efficient way to do it was to coordinate visits to the different provinces and the capital city while linking the trips to museum work-related meetings.

3.5.3.2.1 Transcription of interviews

For interviews, the transcription was done verbatim in order to capture the original interaction as closely as possible; the conversation was transcribed in the form of a dialog (Bernard 2006,487–488). Interviews were conducted in Spanish, as this was the native language of most of the interviewees. The transcription of the interviews conducted in their native language allowed for the analysis of other nuances of meaning. The transcription also permitted a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006), which helped identify patterns in the responses from which themes could be derived (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). The thematic analysis done involved the organization of information according to the topic of each question. An analysis of keywords used by the interviewees throughout the responses was also conducted, as well as the words used by different interviewees to respond to the same questions. These words were used to create codes of related patterns in the answers and were later compiled in broader categories of information that permitted the organization of the codes in broader and more relatable terms.

As the interview protocol promised anonymity for the participants in the study, codes were assigned to each respondent of the interview questions. The coding of the participants' names were assigned based on the chronological order in which the interviews took place, or in the order the written answers were received as well as to the type of relationship each participant had with heritage area:

- Participants 1 through 14: Public heritage officials with current or former posts in a governmental position;
- Participants 15 and 16: Heritage managers;
- Participants 17 through 19: Private collectors with collections open to the public;

- Participants 20 through 22: Private collectors with collections closed to the public.

Notes were regularly taken during the course of the research. Both note-writing and constant comparative analysis helped to minimize bias because both activities are reflective, which aided objectivity throughout the study. Field notes, in particular, served as reminders to separate personal thoughts that might impose on the theory from the information that emerged from the data (Mills and Birks 2014). Field notes included topics such as thoughts or concerns related to the study, the interpretation of relevant activities in participant observation, reflections on the quality of the process, and thoughts on emerging codes and categories.

3.5.4 Participant observation

Participant observation was used as part of the methodology of data collection (Jerolmack et al. 2018), alongside the review of documents, surveys, and interviews. As an unobtrusive method in qualitative studies, participant observation permits the researcher to observe activities in a specific research setting while the researcher attempts to determine what is going on (Bernard 2006; Jorgensen 1989). For the present research, participant observation consisted of interactions with rural communities in the scope of the Nexus 1492 excavations and related activities in the northwest of the country between July of 2013 to October 2019. The observation provided an opportunity to better understand and capture the details of interactions between local community members, project researchers, and community heritage administrators in a natural setting. This form of observation was considered more appropriate within the local communities near the excavation projects. Long-term interactions in the local community allowed for participation in activities to not be perceived as a forced integration. Observations carried out within the project's geographical context were not disruptive as it was more feasible than to survey people or ask for their opinions in structured ways. This afforded a chance to learn about the interest of local community members near the archaeological sites within the Nexus 1492 project and their willingness to be more actively involved with local Indigenous heritage and its preservation. Observation and informal conversation during activities with the local community yielded field notes for thematic analysis and interpretation.

Participant observation was possible throughout the study by taking advantage of the Nexus 1492 project activities that were organized with the local community in different geographical sections and neighborhoods within the municipalities of Laguna Salada and

Cruce de Guayacanes, located in Valverde Province. As a local researcher, participant observation was a more viable long-term data collection strategy that permitted witnessing the interaction of local community groups related to the research topic. In this role, the researcher was an outsider who participated in some aspects of the lives of local community members in the areas where the research took place. Notes recording and photographing was done as much as possible. In many cases, participation also helped to become involved in the organization and coordination of activities with members and leaders of the community being studied. Although this meant a limited capability to take notes in situ, it also provided greater insight into how activities and events were coordinated locally. A regular presence at events and activities also allowed the minimization of the curiosity effect as the researcher became a common presence in local gatherings. This further contributed to building a rapport with community leaders and neighbors, which facilitated ordinary conversations that often reveal details of life in the community at other times of the year when the researcher was not around.

The main activities organized by the project supervisor and other researchers, along with local community members and leaders that allowed for observation in the areas under study, were:

- Community field days;
- Community sharing days;
- Neighborhood visits;
- Teacher workshops;
- Exhibition openings; and
- Documentary presentations.

3.5.5 Documentation and archival data

Public institutions regulated by the General Law of Free Access to Public Information (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 200-04) were visited to search for historical documents in their public archives. The analysis of institutional records helped identify how far back governmental entities have been documenting issues regarding the inventories of Indigenous heritage collections. A review of archived inventory lists, reports, newspaper articles, bulletins, magazines, official gazettes, and governmental correspondence was performed at the following institutions:

- General Archives of the Nation;
- Museo del Hombre Dominicano's library;
- Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods;
- Library of the Senate, Dominican Congress; and
- Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Antropológicas' library.

Public records were examined at the above-listed institutions to form an idea of their content, as well as how the information has historically been archived and made available to the public. The review of the documents provided a historical overview of how archaeological sites have been represented in government archives. Legislative documents on laws, decrees, and heritage policy were also examined. This helped to determine how public policy has influenced or impacted the care of public and private Indigenous heritage collections. In addition, the document review included any promotional material that described the institutions and collections. The documents reviewed included digital and print materials.

3.5.6 Data processing and analysis

In qualitative studies, data processing and analysis is a fundamental step in the research process. The analysis of the collected data covers narrative—the accounts of related events, the identification of critical aspects of the data, and how the data is organized and presented (Creswell 2009). This analysis allows the researcher to interpret the data to address the research questions and present conclusions (Creswell 2009). Methods used in qualitative studies help decode the meanings people ascribe to their experiences and opinions (Mason 2002). The inclusion of multiple voices by incorporating different instruments in qualitative research contributes to a better understanding of people's realities.

The present study largely depended on gathering information from the people who volunteered to participate by completing surveys and interviews based on their availability and not on a random sample; therefore, it was considered unnecessary to use specialized software for the management of the data. As information was collected and processed, the following categories were identified for analysis: collections, surveys, interviews, and participant observation notes. The numerical data generated through the survey administration was processed and analyzed using Microsoft Excel 2016, and the narratives and text-based information were processed in Microsoft Word 2016. As data analysis requires data reduction, display, and elaboration of conclusion and verification (Miles and

Huberman 1994), the organization of files by theme helped in the analytical process. Printed information from these files was analyzed and sorted thematically for evaluation, and conclusions were drawn to address the research questions.

A review of archival data, collection inventories, and legislative texts were undertaken in order to determine when heritage issues first began appearing in public records. The review of historical documents regarding the creation of the first national museum and how archaeological finds were reported also formed part of the analysis of documents. This analysis was done to reconstruct the trajectory of the primary collection of Indigenous archaeological heritage from its foundation to its current status of the most extensive collection in a public building.

All the data generated by the analysis of documents, interviews, surveys, and participant observation was part of the process of connecting data. The identification of trends, patterns, and themes, and the results of mapping contributed to the formulation of conclusions and recommendations related to the research questions.

The responses from the survey questionnaires were processed in Excel, which allowed the combination of the data into a standard file that could generate graphs as responses were tallied. Survey respondents had the opportunity to read the questionnaires themselves or have the questions and response options read aloud by me or the survey administrators that were assisting me.

In addition, the results of the first National Survey on Cultural Consumption were also used as a reference to analyze survey results and governmental data regarding consumption patterns and cultural activities that, for the first time in 2014, the Ministry of Culture of the Dominican Republic collected through the Ministry of Labor and Central Bank's yearly labor force and homes survey. The results were compared to try to identify any relevant information that could be linked to the results of the present study. Once the surveys and interviews were conducted, a descriptive and critical analysis were undertaken to draw comparisons and identify distinctions between the groups surveyed and interviewed with regards to their knowledge, opinions, concerns, and recommendations.

Interviews were transcribed, in full, from the recording on the phone into a Word document from the 2016 Microsoft Office Suite. The transcribed interviews were analyzed individually and in-depth to identify any significant issues highlighted by interviewees. The

analysis was conducted each time a transcription was completed, allowing me to reflect and take notes as information began to emerge from the data. Notes were taken and key words were highlighted as transcriptions were read. Repeated words and phrases were documented, seeking patterns in the answers. The identification of common themes helped understand the perspective of the interviewees. The transcripts were compared to identify these common themes, create categories, and draw meaningful conclusions from the commonalities and differences in the individual responses.

The transcribed interviews were manually coded by highlighting statements, words, or phrases of interest from each Word document generated. Highlighted statements or phrases considered important were paraphrased and then coded using single or multiple words to aid in comparing all the participants' answers (Auerbach and Silverstein 2003). Codes were used to analyze interview transcriptions in order to manage the qualitative data and identify patterns in the participants' experiences or opinions (Bernard 2006). The transcription of interviews and the manual coding provided further opportunities to understand the participants' opinions. Described themes in the data incorporated some of the interviewees' statements verbatim to allow the voices of the respondents to be reflected in the presentation of results. Significant quotes from the interviews were incorporated instead of making strict summaries and analysis, to encapsulate the findings. This also helped to minimize researcher bias. It was important to present significant parts of the opinions transcribed word for word. For the researcher this became a means of illustrating the thought patterns, beliefs, and values that shaped the discussion of responses on how to better manage Indigenous heritage collections. Documenting extensive relevant responses by members of the heritage and governmental communities helped identify how to forge connections using a local approach that could be considered more realistic in terms of implementation.

Notes and photographs were taken during participant observation opportunities at community activities. The notes contributed to better understand the physical, social, cultural, and economic lives of the people with whom the researcher interacted. Observation allowed for the identification of relationships between local community members and researchers, as well as the interactions that resulted from sharing information about the objects and excavations. Notes were regularly reviewed throughout the project. The field notes were particularly helpful for identifying local members who could assist in the coordination of other community activities, as the activities provided opportunities to observe active participants. Social interactions were possible through neighborhood visits, which afforded

casual conversation opportunities that led to the discussion of the research topic. Field notes were made after informal encounters and activities with the community and later analyzed them to identify reactions, behaviors, actions, and responses related to the objects excavated and the information generated through the research of Nexus 1492.

3.6 Research bias and validity

As the research advanced, the researcher increasingly began to recognize the *a priori* knowledge brought into this study. The background in museum work, specifically at an archaeological museum, was recognized as a risk factor in introducing bias during data analysis, which bore the potential of compromising the validity of the study results. A critical condition of qualitative studies is to have gathered accurate and credible information (Creswell 2009). As the validity of qualitative research has been questioned due to replicability issues (Cho 2006), triangulation was used as a technique to minimize the researcher's bias. Triangulation is "the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals [...] in descriptions and themes in qualitative research" (Creswell 2012, 259). To avoid this, triangulation of the research data was incorporated into the methodology to ensure that the information collected was analyzed and cross-checked (Creswell 2009). The review of documents, interviews, and questionnaires, and participant observation were the basic forms of inquiry. This triangulated data gathering process provided a more comprehensive picture of how different groups of people are using Indigenous heritage resources.

For interviews, the validity check was undertaken by cross-referencing the coded data with the original transcription. Direct quotations from the interviews were used to evidence the meaning of the category code, allowing for verification.

3.7 Ethics and privacy

As mentioned earlier, there were no ethical or privacy issues during this study. For the surveys and interviews, confidentiality was guaranteed in every interaction with participants. Surveys were designed to be completed voluntarily and anonymously without the need to add the participant's name.

For face-to-face interviews, oral consent was obtained. The purpose of the research was described each time and interviewees were assured that they could stop recording at any moment, emphasizing that there would be no mention of information they wanted to keep off the record. For the participants interviewed in person, two people from the public sector

asked to stop the recording at least once during the interview. Only one person, a private collector, refused to be formally interviewed. Notes were taken after meeting the private collector who refused to be recorded, as the conversation revolved around the interview questions.

For interviewees who answered the questions in writing, an introductory paragraph indicated the nature of the research and the answers' anonymity. The written responses to the interview questions were taken as consent to their participation.

The role as a researcher was fully disclosed during the participant observation process. Everyone the researcher encountered during participation in the Nexus 1492 project's activities knew the researcher was part of the team working in the area. The researcher developed relationships with key informants and stakeholders in the local community and participated as a coordinator of activities without calling attention or controlling the environment.

Summary

This chapter provided a detailed overview of the theoretical framework and methodology used to answer the research questions. A critical museology framework served to guide the methodological approach used to determine how Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic can relate to communities to transform discussions on cultural identity, inclusion, social cohesion, and increase heritage awareness that can help improve how the country communicates cultural identity narratives and to empower communities to contribute to the preservation and protection of these collections. The role of critical museology is explained in relation to the need to challenge reductionist historical narratives. Details on the research's approach, procedures, participants, and data collection tools illustrate how the study was conducted.

Chapter 4 explored how heritage collections have been studied and how museums have approached community engagement in order to identify patterns of possible community connections.

CHAPTER 4. Heritage issues and museums in the Dominican Republic: A diachronic perspective

4.1 Introduction

The present chapter addresses the results of research regarding the nature of heritage issues in the Dominican Republic and where Indigenous heritage collections stand in relation to the development of legislation and protection laws. The diachronic view of Dominican legislation is based on a review of institutional publications, archival data, and on interviews. The review attempts to follow a chronological path in showing by what means Indigenous heritage collections have fallen into neglect, contributing to the cultural disconnect with the communities surrounding them.

In the sections that follow, the general characteristics of Dominican society and how the broad concept of heritage are addressed as well as how general definitions of culture are featured in the legislative language of the nation's constitution and heritage laws. Next, the development of Dominican heritage legislation is reviewed departing from collecting accounts that can be recognized in early presidential decrees. The international context of heritage legislation is also described to show how the development of Dominican legislation at times ran parallel to international concerns. The chapter also presents the legislative context of the formation of Indigenous heritage collections, which helps put in perspective the status of Dominican heritage issues today, including complex heritage market issues the country currently faces.

4.2 Dominican society

Today, the Dominican Republic shares the island of Hispaniola (Figure 2) and has been continuously populated for over 6,000 years—with the Republic of Haiti (Cassá 1992; 1974). Occupying the larger part of the island, with 48,670 square kilometers, the Dominican Republic is divided territorially into three macro-regions (North, Southwest, and Southeast), ten administrative regions, 31 provinces (Figure 3), and one National District (ONE 2019). The Dominican Republic has an estimated population of 10 million people (CIA 2020; ONE 2015). In 2010, about 4 million people lived in the National District and the larger Santo Domingo Province, and Santiago Province was the second largest metropolitan area (ONE 2010). The official language is Spanish, and the most widely practiced religion is Roman Catholicism, followed by Protestantism (CIA 2020). Forty percent of its population is between 25 and 54 years of age, and 27% falls under the age of 14 (CIA 2010). Until at least

the year 2010, the majority of the population considered itself to be of mixed ethnicity—58% self-identified as *mestizo* or *indio*, and 12% as *mulato*, while 16% self-identified as black, 13% as white, and less than 1% as other (CIA 2020). The high population of *mestizo* or *indio* individuals could be considered an indicator of a strong interest in Indigenous heritage. Nevertheless, *indio* is no longer an ethnic category in the official identity document or *cedula de identidad*. The *indio* category was replaced with *mulato* by the Junta Central Electoral (Central Electoral Board), under the argument that most people did not identify exclusively with the category “black,” that the majority preferred the label *mulato*, and that the term *indio* reflected racist policies that emerged during the dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo (Suero 2011).



Figure 2. Map of the Dominican Republic and the Caribbean/Central America region. Map by Finn van der Leden, courtesy of Nexus 1492, 2020.



Figure 3. Administrative Regional Map of the Dominican Republic with macro-regions and political division featuring the 31 provinces and the National District. Map source: Oficina Nacional de Estadística de la República Dominicana, Macroregion, 2020.

Today, the Dominican Republic is internationally recognized as having strong, rapid economic growth in comparison to other Latin American and Caribbean countries (Banco Mundial n.d., “Dominican Republic: Panorama General” section; UNICEF n.d.; USAID 2013). There is also, however, the recognition that the country continues to face the challenges of poor quality of education (UNICEF n.d.; USAID 2019), economic inequality, unemployment, crime, violence against women, sex trafficking, discrimination, corruption, unreliable electricity, poor health, and vulnerability to climate change (USAID 2019).

Against this backdrop, heritage management issues take a back seat, and there is scarce information on investment in cultural programs to determine whether or not cultural initiatives form part of the development agenda in international governmental collaborations (Siegel 2011). The cultural diversity of the country is not a common curriculum topic in the Dominican formal educational system. The contribution of African heritage to the Dominican identity was largely unrecognized until the 1970s (Sanchez-Carretero 2005). The Museo del Hombre Dominicano has been one of the few institutions to bring aspects of intangible African heritage to international light through UNESCO’s declaration of Dominican Afro-religious music as part of humanity’s intangible heritage (Perdomo and Torres-Saillant 2007;

Sanchez-Carretero 2005). Nevertheless, the few studies that address museums as heritage products often do this briefly as a way to enrich the touristic appeal of the country (Agüera 2013; Castellanos Verdugo and Agüera 2013), and not as places where people can go to better understand the complexity of Dominican society.

4.3 Cultural heritage and Indigenous heritage collections

The concept of cultural heritage responds to changing global conditions that have shifted from contextualizing tangible cultural goods toward including intangible manifestations and traditions (Siegel et al. 2013; Baldeon 2001). Applying this concept to a local interpretation in the Dominican Republic, it is congruent with how culture is defined in the Dominican constitution, namely as the collectively assumed characteristics of a people's lifestyle (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 41-00 of 2000). While cultural heritage is equated with the expression of tangible and intangible goods, values, and symbols of the nation, the definition encompasses a comprehensive list of artistic and cultural forms (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 41-00 of 2000) but leaves out the recognition of Indigenous heritage from its definition.

The earliest heritage legislation also recognized the cultural value of archaeological objects, as they were considered to be “national monuments to be conserved for the glory of the Republic” (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Decreto 4347 of 1903 paragraph 1). The objects were later designated to be under the state's permanent care (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 318 of 1968), regardless of whether they were in public or private hands. This designation is also found in the French legislation for historical monuments (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley de 1913), as well as in the Spanish legislation, where the nation's historical riches are said to constitute part of the National Cultural Treasures (Baldeon 2001). Categorizing archaeological objects as relics that require conservation to legislatively make them property of the state marked a significant shift in preserving and protecting the nation's cultural heritage.

For the purposes of the present research, Dominican Indigenous heritage collections are considered to comprise archaeological artifacts that were created by the Indigenous population of the Caribbean between 6000 and 500 years ago, can still be found in the Dominican Republic, and may be under either public or private care. This definition stems from the recognized neglect identified in the language of the first piece of heritage legislation, which declared archaeological objects the property of the state in order to

preserve them. The legislative text also recommended that the government needed to create a national museum to house the antiquities that had been underappreciated to avoid them being taken out of the country (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Decreto 4347 of 1903 paragraph 2 and 3, Articles 1 and 2). The recognition of the illegal trafficking threat indicates an early legislative attempt to minimize looting and significant heritage loss.

4.3.1 Dominican heritage legislation recounted

The history of Indigenous heritage collections in the Caribbean and the Dominican Republic starts with the brutal conquest of the Americas upon the first European invasions of the Caribbean islands. As the European nations' territorial and economic expansion took place overseas, samples of the cultural production of native populations were plundered and gifted to royal families (Russo 2011; Schnapp 2011; Vilches 2004). As royal collections were enriched with conquest goods brought to Europe, these objects served as the foundations of the seventeenth-century cabinets of curiosity that became available to the public interested in seeing what was being manufactured in the faraway conquered territories.

Studies of European collections have highlighted cultural objects from New World conquests, such as those from Margaret of Austria's early royal acquisitions (MacDonald 2002) and the Medici family collection (Keating and Markey 2011). However, except for the inventories of royal collections in European kingdoms or museums with American collections, the history of the documentation of cultural material appropriated from the island of Hispaniola is still a seldom-explored topic (Cabello Carro 2008; 2011). Furthermore, details of how Indigenous heritage collections were formed in the Dominican Republic are almost nonexistent. While the documentation practices of archaeological museums in Europe improved by the end of the eighteenth century and documentation became a more common practice (Pearce 1990), no formal practices of heritage documentation were established in the Dominican Republic until the late 1800s. Official records do not indicate how the government of the Dominican Republic addressed the ownership of archaeological objects. The earliest formed public institutions lack information on what were the cultural discussions of the time. Compilations of heritage laws do not provide the context to understand how the legislation on public ownership of archaeological objects was determined or what were the specific circumstances that led Congress to declare it (Pina 1978).

The first heritage legislation, dating to February of 1870, was formulated to declare the Alcazar de Colon (known as Columbus's house) and part of the wall of another colonial

structure as national monuments to protect them from further decay. The text of the legal disposition highlights the historical glory that monuments represent for a country, and the language used serves as evidence of the value Spanish conquistadors placed on this cultural material: “The Alcazar de Colon [...] is the first building to be constructed in all of the New World, the construction of which was supervised in person by that great man, famous for his courage, his intelligence, and his bad fate” (personal translation, paragraph 3, Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Decreto No. 1164; Pina 1978). Although laws in the Dominican Republic follow the model of a democratic republic and are designed and approved by the National Congress (composed of the Senate and Deputy Chambers), the first legal attempts to protect Indigenous heritage, beginning in 1903, were solidified by executive decrees issued by the president of the republic, as other nations were doing at that time. For a summary of Dominican heritage legislation see Table 1.

Thirty-three years after the first governmental action to address heritage preservation for conquest-period architectural monuments, the government created the mandate that declared Indigenous archaeological objects—ceramics, stone, or bone—to be national property. The governmental mandate of 1903 (Decreto No. 4347) placed archaeological objects under the category of monuments. In addition, it indicated that the objects had long been underappreciated, and, even by that time, many had been taken out of the country to enrich foreign museum collections (paragraph 1–3; Pina 1978). The legislation also reflects the intention to protect any objects made by the island’s Indigenous people that could be found on any terrain or in caves, explicitly declaring them exclusive state property, not to be taken out of the country or appropriated by other people. Nevertheless, the legislation also indicated that the private collections “formed before the date of (the) decree” were exempted and were only to be listed (personal translation, Decreto No. 4347, article 2; Pina 1978), without indicating that the list of objects should be included in the national registry. It took 400 years from the time the first European government representation was established on the island to issue a legal document addressing how to report and handle Indigenous heritage objects. The reporting hierarchy placed the local authorities first, and all efforts were to contribute to the creation of the National Museum (Decreto 4347, articles 3 to 7; Pina 1978, 13–14).

Ten years later, the Dominican National Congress established the law that created the National Museum, with its seat at the Alcazar de Colón (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 5207, March 1913), although the actual site is said to have been Casa

Aybar, another colonial structure next to the Alcazar de Colón. However, no significant records were found that could corroborate that the National Museum at the time was a fully functioning institution, regularly open to the public. Official historical records were searched in the files located in the Archivo General de la Nación (National Archives of the Nation). Copies of brief internal governmental communications with reports of activities and inventories mentioning the word “museum” were the only documents identified that attested to the museum’s operations at this early date.

As noted above, the legal text of the 1903 law prohibited the exportation of “archaeological objects manufactured by the Indigenous people of the island” (personal translation, Article 1; Pina 1978), with the purpose of conserving all historical artifacts distributed throughout the country. In 1927, a law was issued to create another national museum that included the national library (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 666), but there is no mention of Indigenous archaeological collections or what the content of the new museum would be.

The first commission to oversee the conservation of monuments, historical and artistic pieces, and archaeological objects was created in 1932 in answer to an urgent call by the National Congress. By then, all monuments, objects, and works of historical importance throughout the country were to be under official protection (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 293 of February 1932). A three-member commission, based in the capital, would have the capacity to draft its own regulations for approval by the president of the republic, and one of its first tasks was to make a list with all the buildings, works, and artifacts that needed to be conserved or officially monitored, even though the researcher could not verify the existence of this list or how comprehensive it was.

In response to another call of urgency, in 1937, the National Congress created an additional commission to act as an assessment body for the National Museum (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 1341; Pina 1978). The commission existed within the former Ministry of Education and Fine Arts so that both could cooperate in the development of the National Museum. However, it acted more like a ruling body, as it oversaw overseeing the operations, including dealing with how objects were presented in the exhibitions and activities. The commission could also allow provincial boards to buy or receive private donations of historical, artistic, or scientific material and could explore or find

Type of legislation	Description	Year of creation
Decree 4347	Declares archaeological objects property of the Nation; establishes the need for a national museum	1903
Law 5207	Prohibits the exportation of archaeological objects elaborated by the Indigenous people of the island; declares the creation of a national museum	1913
Law 666	Assigns funds to the creation of a national museum and library	1927
Law 293	Creation of the first commission to oversee the conservation of monuments, and historic, artistic, and archaeological objects	1932
Law 1341	Creation of a commission to develop the National Museum	1937
Decree 222	Creation of the Dominican Commission for Archaeology	1938
Law 1400	Creation of the Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Antropológicas (Dominican Institute for Anthropological Research)	1947
Law 473	Creation of the first heritage-related tax exemption legislation	1964
Law No. 318	First comprehensive legislation on cultural heritage	1968
Regulation No. 4195	Concerning the Cultural Heritage office	1969
Law No. 492	Declares various national monuments of architectural nature and archaeological sites.	1969
Law No. 318	Creation of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano	1972
Law No. 564	Addresses the protection and conservation of national ethnological and archaeological objects.	1973
Decree No. 2310	Establishes the Centre for the Inventory of Cultural Properties	1976
Law No. 41-00	Creation of the Ministry of Culture (formerly known as Secretary of Culture); modified Law 318	2000
Regulations for the National Museum Network	Norms and procedures for the National Museum Network	2007
Regulation for the Archaeological Research Committee	Procedures for archaeological research in the country	2017 pending approval

Table 1. Relevant legislation related to Indigenous heritage issues in the Dominican Republic.

information regarding new objects in their immediate geography (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 1341, Articles 4 to 6; Pina 1978). Most importantly, the legislation established that the commission would carry out an annual review of the

museum's inventory, making sure that each object was identified with a number, description, cost of acquisition, and commercial value, and would send a copy of this inventory to the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts every year.

A year later, in 1938, the president at the time, Jacinto Peynado, established yet another commission to handle archaeological affairs; thus, the Dominican Commission for Archaeology was formed (Decree 222 of September 1938; Pina 1978). The commission was to expand, study, and suggest standards to better organize Indigenous and colonial archaeological collections and had to draft regulations for this and submit them to the executive branch. The commission members included architect Antonio Caro Álvarez, who later became not only the designer of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano but also served as director from its inauguration in 1973 until his death in 1978 (del Castillo 2016).

Early regulations—how early heritage laws were supposed to be implemented—have not been found, and none of the documents mentioned in the different decrees or laws are listed in the resources of the Museo del Hombre's library, the National Library, the Library of the Senate, or the General Archives of the nation. The lack of accessible information on the background and context for the elaboration of decrees or how the commission carried out its responsibilities does not permit a clear understanding of the political struggles related to heritage ownership and preservation issues at that time. It is through the writings of Fewkes (1891), Krieger (1929, 1931), and Gabb (1932) that it is learnt that a significant number of important archaeological objects ended up in Europe and the United States through the visits of explorers that worked in the Dominican Republic in this period.

Almost ten years after the creation of the commission, the Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Antropológicas (Dominican Institute for Anthropological Research), or INDIA, was established as part of the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo (Ley 1400 of 1947) to foster academic research in the areas of anthropology and archaeology. It was founded by Emil Boyrie Moya, who is considered to be the first Dominican archaeologist and the most prominent collector of it. He was also the main promoter of the legislation that prohibited the illicit traffic of archaeological material outside of the country (García et al. 1970; Boyrie Moya 1955).

The center's mandate included increasing archaeological research and preparing the classification of archaeological material found in excavations, in the National Museum archives, and in private collections. The legislation that created the institute made the

National Museum a dependency, and the commissions to oversee the museum became part of the new institution's board structure. Distinguished personnel were later brought in to run the institute, dissolving the Assessment Commission of the National Museum as well as the National Archaeological Commission. Engineers, architects, doctors, and historians (Decree 4370 of May 1947), all highly educated and members of the middle and upper economic classes of the Dominican Republic, were part of the board of the first institution, which had an academic research focus.

In 1964, the first heritage-related tax-exemption legislation was introduced to address economic responsibilities for collections in private hands (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 473). It was created by the tripartite government of the time to exempt archives, libraries, and private archaeological collections from inheritance taxes (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 473 of November 1964; Pina 1978). These collections would be tax-exempt if the collector's descendants agreed to maintain ownership, keep the collection together and at good conservation standards, allow authorized researchers access to the cultural material, have sporadic exhibitions for the public, and have the collection inventoried. This was the first time that management issues regarding private Indigenous heritage collections were addressed in some detail; however, no records were found to verify actual declarations of tax-exempt collections.

The first main cohesive heritage legislation was passed in 1968. It divided the country's cultural heritage into four areas: monumental, artistic, documentary, and folkloric (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 318 of 1968; Pina 1978). Indigenous monuments, ruins, or cemeteries were part of the classification of monumental heritage, along with all types of colonial structures constructed before the 1800s. Any private collections that could be considered to have heritage value had to be declared within 90 days of any transaction that allowed them to gather the collections. The law reiterated that the objects could not be taken out of the country without the executive branch's proper permission, and only for a short time, for the exhibition, classification, or study of the collections. Law 318 was also the first piece of legislation to address the topic of archaeological excavations more explicitly. It prohibited excavations in search of mines and archaeological objects in any part of the country. It established the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts as the main authority extending scientific research permissions to national universities, museums, and institutions of a scientific character, or whomever the authorities felt could have such authorization. The law further stated that every find became national

heritage. Everyone who found an archaeological object was under the obligation to declare it at the National Museum or the corresponding municipality.

As tourism started to develop in the country, the Office of Cultural Heritage was created in 1967, an office that originally depended on the General Directorate for Tourism. Starting in 1962, under Law 6004 and through Decree 8446 (Pina 1978), this Tourism directorate had been part of the Corporation for Industrial Promotion. In 1969, regulations were created for Law 318, established in the previous year (Regulation 4195 of 1969; Pina 1978). This law designated the Office of Cultural Heritage as the entity overseeing the implementation of activities related to the nation's monumental and artistic heritage, specifically listing the creation of a department for archaeological excavations and designing an archaeological map of the country, or *Carta Arqueológica* (Pina 1978). An archaeological excavation was defined as the “deliberate and methodical removal of soil in respect to the previous evidence of the existence of archaeological sites” (Regulation 4195, Article 15; Pina 1978), which helped place emphasis on the need for a methodological approach to the study of sites. The archaeological department of the Office of Cultural Heritage was also in charge of keeping records and giving permits, as well as drafting and conserving the actual documents of the inventories. These records were to be as detailed and as complete as possible, aiming to have a list of all sites, ruins, caves, roads, monuments, and everything that was known or would be in the future with its precise “typographical, period, civilization, and race” categorization (Regulation 4195, Article 15, Walter Palm 1982; Pina 1978; Boyrie Moya 1955). Such documents were to be accompanied by detailed maps, drawings, photographs, and anything else that would allow for identification. However, excavation records at the Office of Cultural Heritage's library were not located, and the staff did not know these requirements, making it even harder to follow the trail on the history of collecting Indigenous heritage material.

The year 1969 also saw the creation of Law 492, which declared approximately 60 archaeological sites, many of them known to be associated with Indigenous heritage and history. The law also incorporated specific articles that addressed excavation guidelines in private properties, the valuation and sales processes for archaeological finds, and restrictions in the commercialization of heritage objects (Congreso Nacional 1969 de la República Dominicana).

In 1972, the National Museum ceased to exist and gave way to the creation of the

Museo del Hombre Dominicano (Museum of Dominican Man) (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 318 of 1972). Furthermore, the mandate by the National Congress ascribed the Museo del Hombre Dominicano to the Institute of Dominican Culture, and the new institution was to be “in charge of everything related to anthropological, ethnological and pre-Columbian archaeological research in the Dominican Republic” (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 318 of 1972 Article 1; Olsen Bogaert 2000; Pina 1978;). The museum was also to maintain an inventory of its cultural collections, assist the national government in matters relating to the acquisition of private collections that were considered of interest, publish research results, and issue permits for archaeological excavations in accordance with the new heritage legislation. The institution was also in charge of heading a national archaeological board that needed to include other institutions, groups, and private collectors in order to “maintain a fruitful exchange with all those entities that one way or another had a relationship with the activities represented by the Museo del Hombre Dominicano” (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 318 of 1972, Article 5, point j; Pina 1978). The same year, the National Congress approved adhering to the 1970 United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization’s Convention on the illicit trafficking of cultural property (which will be discussed in the next section), which meant new measures would need to be adopted to prohibit the importation, exportation, and transfer of illicit cultural property.

A year later, the National Congress issued yet another law to protect and conserve national ethnological and archaeological objects (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 564 of 1973). The introduction of the law mentions the indiscriminate collection and trafficking of objects that were leaving the country. To protect and preserve ethnographical and archaeological objects, it again stipulated the definition of the archaeological heritage in question, the state’s ownership of everything found to be of historical interest, and that objects could not be transported, exhibited, or reproduced without special authorization from the executive branch through the Museo del Hombre Dominicano. The legislation specified that all work related to excavations, exploration, or discovery also had to be channeled through the museum and detailed the type of registry to be compiled (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 564 of 1973, Article 4; Pina 1978). It addressed private collectors, authorizing possession as custodial “as long as they kept the registry, having to permanently maintain it on exhibit for the benefit of the people and those who study the subject” and maintain a card registry of the collection and measures for its

conservation (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 564 of 1973, Article 6; Pina 1978). This legislation was the first to specifically address the concrete measures collectors would have to take to be entitled to hold collections, provided that the conditions of acquisition were met legally.

In addition, law 564 indicated that the Dominican government could acquire any object or archaeological collection through purchase, donation, by indefinite loan, or through confiscation, if needed to enrich the collections of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano and the education of the people (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 564 of 1973; Pina 1978). The law also stipulated the capability of the State to declare an archaeological site as an “archaeological zone” either by purchasing or appropriating any portion of land where monuments or archaeological sites could be found (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 564, Articles 8–9; Pina 1978). Finally, sanctions for violations of any aspect of the law were included, such as fines, imprisonment, and confiscation of the archaeological objects at stake (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 564, Article 10; Pina 1978).

In 1973, under the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts, the Centro de Inventario de Bienes Culturales (Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods) was created to be directed by a board of public and private sector representatives. To this day, the center is tasked with the organization and inventory of cultural goods. It is supposed to provide guidance to public and private institutions that need to create their inventories. The center also supports activities and research related to cultural goods, and it helps to raise awareness among the community at-large in the country about the value and need for the preservation of cultural goods (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Decreto 2310 of 1973; Pina 1978). The implementation of the center’s actions over time has been limited by challenging conservation issues and a shortage of personnel.

The Dominican Constitution has been modified several times (Vargas 2018), and in the process, the way cultural heritage is addressed has also been modified. At a higher legislative level, the amended constitution of 1963 was the first to attribute to the National Congress making decisions related to the custody or conservation issues for national heritage objects in private hands. The 1963 version addressed the conservation of antique monuments and archaeological objects that could be declared part of the national archaeological heritage (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Article 114 points 4 and 5, Constitución de

la Nación Dominicana 1963). Amended again in 1966, the Dominican constitution once more listed the nation's archaeological heritage as a point to highlight, stating, "All artistic and historical riches of the country, regardless of who the owner was, will form part of the cultural heritage of the nation and will be under the protection of the state, and the law will establish whatever is needed for its conservation and defense" (Gobierno del Triunvirato, Article 101, Constitución de la República Dominicana 1966). This article remained the same in the amended constitution of 1994.

In the year 2000, after years of demands from citizens active in the country's cultural life, the Ministry of Culture was created, separating the public management of culture from the Ministry of Education with law 41-00. The legislation detailed terms, definitions, fundamental principles, and conditions for the regulation and conservation of cultural heritage and the jurisdiction of the newly formed ministry. The implementation of the current heritage legislation is supposed to be overseen by the National Council of Culture, the nation's highest cultural authority (Ministerio de Cultura n.d. Manual de Funciones). Law 41-00 established the National Museum Network, which, through the General Museum Directorate, has the responsibility to protect, conserve, and develop existing museums and motivate the creation of new museums in all areas that deal with the cultural heritage of the nation (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana Ley 41-00, Articles 45–47, 59, 2000; De Peña 2007).

The National Museum Network determines technical, security, conservation, and management aspects of public museums and collections. The regulations for the National Museum Network were developed in 2007 and were based on the International Council of Museums' Code of Ethics, which establishes the standard practices of the museum field (ICOM n.d.). The regulations were drafted by Luisa de Peña, then director of the national network, who was also the president of ICOM's National Committee. The network creates inventories and registers all public and private museums in the country, reinforcing security issues and museography regulations, promoting programs, creating new spaces, and supervising the compliance of norms and procedures. The network's regulations address the management of cultural goods in detail, highlighting how to conduct preventive conservation, carry out restorations and reconstructions, deal with replicas and reproductions, and even transport objects. For collection management specifically, the network's regulations lay out how acquisitions, purchases, loans, or exchanges can be conducted by public and private institutions. Nevertheless, despite the available descriptive information about what the

National Museum Directorate and the Network do, it does not make clear how the network supervises the implementation of the regulations and forms part of the personnel that is to monitor the implementation of the regulations. There are few museums in Santo Domingo or outside the capital that have received support or supervision for the conservation or management of their heritage collections. There are Dominican museums that do not have inventories and complain about a lack of managerial and financial support, which they blame on the centralized decision-making hierarchy of the Ministry of Culture's top management.

The current heritage legislation at once created the Ministry of Culture and tasked it with the development of regulations for implementing the law with respect to archaeological research projects. The Ministry cemented the role of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano as the main coordinating body for national and international research projects on precolonial history. However, it was not until 2009 that a final version of the regulations was finally drafted by the National Archaeology Commission, whose members were also assigned by the Ministry of Culture. Although it is not clear to me whether the regulations have been officially adopted, the document serves as the basis for proposing projects. It presents the legislative background of the regulations and lays out the prerequisites that need to be met for the approval of archaeological research projects, the details for the presentation of reports, and the sanctions to be administered for violating the regulations. The document also indicates that approval takes place after ratification by the National Archaeology Committee—which must also be involved in the coordination-, and pending review by the vice-minister of cultural heritage (internal document obtained at the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, Ministerio de Cultura 2009).

Policy discussions regarding the legal protection of Indigenous heritage in the Dominican Republic remain an elusive issue. The efforts toward creating a broader scope for the development of heritage work are weakened by the discontinuation of projects based on partisan alliances, lack of personnel, and training for proper supervision. Despite developing the General Directorate of Museums, the organizational arm of the Ministry of Culture to support the institution's work with public and private museums, and creating regulations for the formation of cultural collections, it seems that the additional departments and governmental structures only add bureaucratic layers to a centralized system that has obstructed the development of the professional capacity to care for national heritage goods.

4.3.2 International context of Dominican heritage legislation

The legislative changes that were introduced between the 1940s and 1970s to support national preservation efforts reflect international policy discussions spearheaded by the United Nations Education, Science, and Culture Organization (UNESCO). In terms of the international context of heritage policies, heritage legislation in the Dominican Republic can be linked to discussions of the right to participate in cultural life as codified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNESCO 1948). In addition, the specific guidelines for the protection of cultural heritage, namely the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (UNESCO 1954), contributed to the expansion of heritage legislation. In 1959, the National Congress issued a resolution to approve the convention. Resolution 5219 is one of the few pieces of legislation whose text acknowledges connections with the international policies established to protect cultural property, and which also links the international legislation's provisions with the principles highlighted in the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, as well as the 1935 Washington Pact (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana 1959, Resolución 5219).

The principles that guided international cultural cooperation through the Declaration of Principles of International Cultural Cooperation (UNESCO 1966) and the efforts to prevent the illicit trade of cultural property delineated by the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (UNESCO 1970), represented a fundamental push for the legal framework of the country to be better defined, at least until the establishment of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano in the early 1970s.

The convention urged member states to base their policies on cultural preservation, increase the accessibility of participation in cultural life, encourage studies on different aspects of cultural material, and increase heritage professionals' capabilities to better manage the cultural heritage of the country (UNESCO 1970). The heritage legislation of 1972 that created the Museo del Hombre Dominicano was thus aligned with the priorities identified by the convention. Although there is no direct reference to UNESCO's international policy instrument, the 13 articles that are listed in law 318 of 1972 relate to the way the convention proposed its implementation. Based on the Convention as an international framework, the museum was responsible for creating accessible programming and the necessary policies to implement for the conservation of cultural material (Pina 1978, 96–99). In the same year, a

resolution was issued explicitly to adopt all of the international guidelines established in the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (Resolution 416 of 1972; Pina 1978), and the country ratified it in 1973 (UNESCO 1970; UNESCO 2017). These two pieces of legislation are still referred to as the policies that most closely bind today's Dominican heritage institutions to the international heritage context.

The language used in Dominican legislation suggests that a problematic scenario of heritage depredation had been taking place since before the 1870s. The repeated efforts to establish a mandate to document what was being found throughout the country, what collectors were purchasing, how excavations were conducted, and how the objects found had to be made available indicates that archaeological objects were in the hands of individuals that had not reported the collections, that archaeological sites were being looted indiscriminately, that a sales market had been established, and that objects were being taken out of the country without effective control mechanisms. The creation of laws and public and private museums beginning in the early twentieth century seems to have served as a measure for both controlling the depredation of archaeological sites and increasing awareness of the historical and cultural value of the collected objects. Further laws, regulations, commissions, institutes, centers, museums, and ministries have been created in the Dominican Republic in the 144 years since the first governmental attempt to begin official protection of archaeological heritage. However, the texts of these laws, decrees, and regulations lack details about the context in which the legislation was formulated, and the texts can only be found in published compilations of laws on the topic. Despite extensive research in books, files, and digitalized newspapers at numerous sites (including the General Archives of the Nation, the library at the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, the Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods, and the library at the National Institute for Anthropological Research), no information can be found as to what the discussions regarding heritage had consisted of when the legislation was presented to either the president or the National Congress.

Although collecting tendencies by private collectors have been studied and psychological profiles have been developed (Tanselle 1999; Stewart 1984) there is very little documentation on how collectors in the Caribbean put Indigenous heritage collections together (Curet 2011). Heritage legislation continues to be weakly implemented in the Dominican Republic, as poor documentation formats are still used today, limiting the knowledge that can be obtained from collections and minimizing access to all types of

communities. Because there were no regulations or instructions on how major public reference institutions should keep historical archives or how records are to be submitted to public institutions, organizations and collectors have individualized the way accession documents, studies, or articles on collections and catalogs are maintained. Some collectors have not kept records at all, as there has been no one to regulate or inquire about collection documentation. Even though the legal regulation of the archival function of the state was established in 2008 with law 418 (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana 2008), the situation has not changed very much.

The lack of a uniform archival system combined with poorly skilled staff has limited the capacity to find historical documentation to understand the conditions that brought presidents and members of the Dominican Congress to draft the heritage laws and regulations described above. For that matter, it is difficult to understand the severity of the threats of looting that Indigenous cultural materials have faced since conquest times. It is also hard to understand the roles of the different interest groups that have advocated for the conservation of the Dominican Republic's heritage. The illicit trafficking of Indigenous heritage objects and the looting of sites continues to be an underestimated threat to the country's cultural heritage. The most impactful document to date, in terms of raising the visibility of trafficked objects, is the International Council of Museums' Red List of Dominican Cultural Goods. This list was created with the local Dominican ICOM chapter to "contribute to the fight against illicit traffic of cultural goods that stem from certain countries" (ICOM 2012, 8). In the Dominican Republic in 2016, UNESCO held a meeting for Central American countries as part of a regional project to combat illicit traffic of cultural property and advocate for restitution. The project focused on presenting cooperation-based solutions to addressing the "most urgent needs" of the region regarding the theft, looting, and illegal sale of cultural property (UNESCO 2017, 8). The actions proposed were:

To create a rapidly operational network of experts sharing knowledge and practical tools at the national and sub-regional level with the aim to reduce illicit trafficking in cultural property and facilitate its restitution;

To develop preventive measures for safeguarding movable cultural heritage, with a special focus on the drafting of effective legislation, the update, and modernization of inventories and the creation of specialized police agents, customs units and prosecutors;

To improve awareness on the consequences of illicit trafficking, to involve the public—especially youth—as well as tourists, media, and the art market all over

the world (UNESCO 2017, 8).

The project included an awareness-raising campaign to be implemented at the same time the meetings took place. The working groups were able to produce audiovisual materials, social media spots, and a website to educate the public on its initiatives. However, the stage of implementation of this highly relevant project in the Dominican Republic was not verified through the location of official records. The lack of reports on the implementation of cultural initiatives locally and internationally is a common problem in the country. It prevents citizens from learning the outcomes of projects financed with public funds that could eventually help address heritage issues both in the public and private sector.

4.3.3 Formation of Indigenous heritage collections in a Dominican context

Modern museums have specialization themes in science, art, natural history, specialty subjects, history, and their displays can also be of a focus on culture in general (Kotler and Kotler 1998). In the Dominican Republic, the main categories of museums also follow this format and include museums of art, natural history, archaeology, and ethnographic museums. Large urban museums tend to be under public administration, and the private sector museums tend to be under the care of private collectors or nonprofit organizational management.

The significant acquisition of archaeological objects out of fear of losing artifacts to looters or through illicit traffic (Charney 2015) impacts museums and collectors' management capacity. Objects left in museums as unsolicited donations—i.e., objects brought to museums without being requested (Donnelly-Smith 2011)—are also issues that have not escaped the reality of Dominican museums with Indigenous heritage collections. As director of a private Dominican archaeological museum, the researcher witnessed impactful moments where people from the local community and farther parts of the country brought archaeological objects and sherds as donations, which then had to be turned down since they had no documentation to even indicate where they had gotten them.

The documentation of heritage collections helps to preserve, protect, and interpret cultural material (Government of Canada n.d.). Today, basic documentation standards include acquisition and provenance information, inventories, cataloging, condition reports, and photographs of objects (Buck and Gilmore 2010). Documentation of collections helps ensure that objects are acquired through legitimate sources and provides information on the objects' history and care. In the case of the Dominican Republic, Indigenous heritage collections were

largely formed by the efforts of amateur archaeologists, who followed early collecting practices that did not have today's documentation standards. In addition, large and small collectors fear having no family members interested in caring for the objects they had collected over the course of decades; this has contributed to collections being donated to institutions that cannot necessarily care for them in the long term or provide basic museological standards. In the Dominican Republic, the fear of losing objects to illicit international trafficking has also contributed to the perpetuation of contextless reception and purchases of objects that hinder the development of more enriching programs on Indigenous heritage. As will be discussed in later chapters, both amateur, and experienced collectors still justify their collecting practices as rescue efforts that help prevent the loss of objects and fragments found in and around archaeological sites. The accumulation of under-documented objects results in and is justified by the desire to get support to open a museum eventually.

Because the “colonial state and institutions persisted even after independence” (Robinson et al. 2001, 1370), the impact of colonization on the Caribbean islands is still felt in the continuing institutional neglect of historical and contextual documentation of heritage collections. The resource exploitation model imposed by the Caribbean colonial administration did not prioritize the conservation of documents or the protection of the colony's material heritage. Instead, valuables were shipped to Europe, and no official entity bothered to convey to the local aids, often illiterate, the value of keeping historical documents (Cassá 1998).

Colonial history has affected how collections were formed. The violent cultural destruction, and near extinction of the Indigenous populations during the conquest, altered belief systems and native modes of production. It transformed the identity of the Indigenous settlers (Valcárcel Rojas et al. 2013), and Indigenous settlements were soon buried under European-imposed models of habitation in the new environment—only to be unearthed and looted by thriving collectors that often called themselves amateur archaeologists while exploring sites, contributing to the creation of a purchasing market for pre-Columbian artifacts (Curet 2011). As poignantly highlighted by Sued-Badillo (1992), the historical unconsciousness of the Caribbean regarding its painstaking development does not permit “an integral reconstruction of the social and material processes of the region” (600).

Poor research regarding Caribbean collections, poorly implemented governmental policy and economic support, and low professional training for the management of

collections in the Greater and Lesser Antilles has partly brought about a basin-wide stagnation in the exhibition of cultural and natural objects that help narrate the history of the islands (Maréchal 1998; Cummins 2004). However, the early recognition of archaeological artifacts in collections or found in excavations as part of cultural heritage in the legislative language of some Caribbean nations can be interpreted as an initial maneuver to recuperate Indigenous cultural material as part of national wealth and an aspect of cultural identity (Hernandez Godoy 2014; Cummins et al. 2013; Jaramillo et al. 2004 in Argailot 2012).

In the Dominican Republic, the cultural value of archaeological objects has been recognized as part of the nation's cultural representation. Early legislative documents specifically labeled them as "archaeological relics obtained in the explorations" of archaeological sites and declared them as monuments destined for the formation of a national museum (Ley 5225 of 1913, article 2) and 3). The text of the legislation also acknowledged that there were archaeological collections in private hands and that the State had jurisdiction over them (Ley 5225 of 1913, Colección de Leyes y Decretos, Articles 2 and 3).

The scarcity of official records showing how public and private Indigenous heritage collections were formed in the Dominican Republic suggests that there has been poor maintenance of the paper trails. This insufficient documentation of objects contributes to museums functioning with the minimum required registration records, or sometimes none at all.

The systematic compilation of historical records and legal documents in the Dominican Republic started only in the second decade of the twentieth century, and the National Archives of the Nation was founded in 1935 (Cassá n.d., paragraph 2). General National Archives director Roberto Cassá's reevaluation of how the archives have been organized and preserved helps put the lack of information on heritage collections into perspective. According to Cassá (n.d.), there are hardly any documents prior to the country's independence in 1844, since the status of the colony required sending the most important documents to Europe. This, in addition to the lack of value assigned to keeping records on an island where literacy was minimal during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the high rate at which legal and ecclesiastical documents were damaged and discarded due to climate, pirate and buccaneer thefts, administrative carelessness, and political instability, contributed to the documentation gap that the nation has at many levels and on many topics (Cassá n.d., paragraph 8–14).

Within this poorly documented historical context, the first official public museum in the Dominican Republic was formed in the first part of the twentieth century. Unsurprisingly, too few records detail what types of objects formed the heritage collections of the early version of the National Museum. The researcher tried locating physical and electronic documents that could reflect the process and possible discussions about the need to establish a public collecting institution similar to those established in developed countries and that had largely shaped the country's political, economic, and social structures. Only general lists of inventories and letters with little information were located, mostly through digital records digitized by the Archivo General de la Nación (the Nation's National Archives). The closest sources to a collection's biography found were general inventory lists, museum catalogs, newspaper articles, and newsletters highlighting the person that gathered the collections.

4.4 Dominican heritage issues today

Dominican heritage issues are addressed by the Ministry of Culture, formed in the year 2000, to independently manage cultural phenomena that were previously under the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Culture was created with the intention to test different ways to help organize the cultural activity of the country from a globalized development approach (Conde n.d.). A national plan for cultural development was intended, widely based on citizen consultations (Conde n.d.). As the newly formed ministry embarked on the creation of highly visible cultural programs, art and literature became a focus of cultural production. Some of the highly visible events developed were the art biennial, support for some religious musical heritage performances, and an annual major book fair that draws a significant part of its crowd through mandatory school excursions. Heritage preservation has not been a focus for highly visible cultural activities, despite having the Vice Ministry for Monumental Heritage as a significant department (Figure 4).

Organigrama Estructural del Ministerio de Cultura

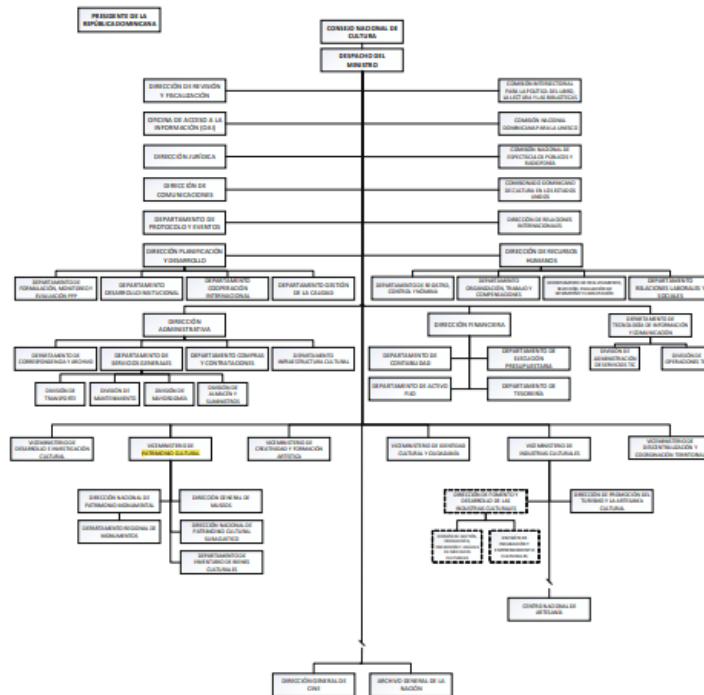


Figure 4. Organizational chart of the Ministry of Culture. Vice Ministry of Heritage is highlighted at the bottom left of the figure. Adapted from the Institutional Strategic Plan 2018–2021, Ministry of Culture of the Dominican Republic, 2018.

Although each province has an appointed official as provincial director of culture, and some regions have their own regional director, there is not a balanced repertoire of cultural activities in most provinces. Although there are regional heritage offices, the core of the activities and programs supported by the Ministry of Culture are concentrated in Santo Domingo, the country’s capital. This has resulted in centralization of cultural offerings in the country’s largest and most densely populated area. Even for the development of academic research projects, the coordination of interdisciplinary collaborations has to be done through the established governmental offices based out of the Ministry’s headquarters. In terms of access to Indigenous heritage information, provinces and rural areas are limited to annual excursions to the Museo del Hombre Dominicano in the capital or occasional visits to a few smaller private collections in the eastern or northwestern regions.

In addition, the national education curriculum does not support heritage education or provide guidance on how to use heritage resources for residents of provinces or rural areas. Topics that address the country’s Indigenous history are taught between the fourth and sixth-

grade levels of the basic education system, focusing mostly on general population movements and quickly jumping to the ‘discovery’ of the Americas, making the figure of Christopher Columbus a central one. Visits to public and private museums with Indigenous heritage collections are a regular activity for most schools, but there are minimal significant curriculum tie-ins for better understanding Indigenous history through the objects students see.

The major activities that provide significant visibility for Indigenous heritage collections in public and private museums relate to the annual celebration of the Día de la Raza (Day of the Race), which falls on or around October 12 every year. This date is commemorated internationally, and its name varies by country. In the Dominican Republic, this annual commemoration was commonly referred to as Discovery Day, but in the last couple of years, it has also been called the celebration of the Day of the Identity and Cultural Diversity (CDN 2017); its purpose is to commemorate the day Christopher Columbus set foot in the Americas, on one of the islands in the Bahamian archipelago, in 1492. Public performances, television and radio programs, and roundtables and other discussions are hosted at public and private institutions, and citizen parades are held to celebrate the Dominican society’s mixed racial and cultural composition. However, recent years have seen some disagreement about the way it is celebrated. Some media outlets highlight historians’ opinions on how the date should be referred to, and how it is wrong to celebrate an event that decimated the island’s Indigenous people (El Día 2016; Listín Diario 2016); nevertheless, schools continue to hold activities in a celebratory manner. Every year, schools from different parts of the country schedule excursions to museums around October 12 to commemorate Old and New World encounters. Some schools hold special tours focused on the traditional conception of the discovery of the island. Other schools use the museum settings to have theatrical skits of the European and Indigenous encounters, with students donning costumes to represent Indigenous and enslaved Africans with Europeans while exchanging goods or making food (Figure 5), using contemporary objects similar to those found in Indigenous heritage collections.

Similar annual celebrations take place in commemoration of December 5, 1492: the day Columbus landed on the northwest coast of the island he came to call Hispaniola, which today is shared by the Republic of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Now called the “Encounter of Cultures” celebration by some, it is the occasion of cultural activities highlighting the importance of the encounter; these often take place on a smaller scale than

those performed for October 12. Nevertheless, public coverage of the festivity still portrays it as a national commemoration of the discovery of the island (Diario Libre 2019; Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores n.d.; Bello Romero 2015).



Figure 5. School students performing for the scheduled October 12 celebrations, Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology, La Romana, 2014. Photo by author, 2014.

Scarce efforts have been made to diversify the use of Indigenous collections beyond their role in school tours and in performances and cultural activities related to early conquest events. Some private museums have sponsored projects or funded publications and teacher's guides to help teachers see the educational potential of Indigenous, including the Altos de Chavon Regional Museum of Archaeology's 1995 *Prehistoria para maestros* (Prehistory for teachers) and 2003 *Mirándonos en el espejo del tiempo* (Looking at ourselves in the mirror of time). The use of these didactic heritage materials has not been significantly incorporated into the Ministry of Education's curriculum as supporting resources, and the published materials have not been widely adopted as part of teacher training efforts—despite its low cost to teachers and schools—as it is not a mandatory resource from the Ministry. Teachers have expressed that if it is not included in the Ministry's directions on what materials must be used in planning lessons, some will not go the extra mile to read and accommodate more material than the minimum required (personal conversations with teachers for input on the design of museum didactic material). This has resulted in the museums having to market the didactic resources directly to the individual public and private schools that are interested in enriching students' experiences on visits to public and private Indigenous heritage collections open to

the public. The process is costly and time-consuming for these institutions, which are generally nonprofit, with limited personnel and financial resources.

4.5 Heritage market issues in the Dominican Republic¹

As it is addressed in the review of heritage legislation earlier in this chapter, collectors are recognized as important contributors to the formation of collections in the Dominican Republic. The country has seen some of its most important collections made accessible through the private sector—such as the creation of nonprofit educational institutions for national and international visitors to enjoy, some of which will be presented in Chapter 5. Nevertheless, private collectors have also contributed to one of the least discussed heritage issues that the country faces, the heritage market of Indigenous objects.

The enactment of heritage laws to convert cultural objects into state property took place from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries in the hopes of discouraging the looting of sites (Gerstenblith 2007, 174). Nonetheless, the common law of finders—which may enable a finder to claim ownership of a find if it remains unclaimed after being publicly announced—arguably contributes to raising the prices of found objects (Wendel 2007, 1024). The absence of a claim would give the looter an opportunity to become part of an unregulated market where unclaimed finds may be sought and sold. The Dominican heritage market suffers from such unregulated trade.

Looters—those who, intentionally and without authorization, enter an archaeological site to find objects to sell on the market—tend to destroy the archaeological record (Gerstenblith 2007, 174; Wendel 2007, 76). The looters are pulled into the commercial cycle to supply the demands of the art market and are not easily deterred by prohibitory legislation, which is often inconsistent and scarcely monitored (Borodkin 1995). The Dominican Republic lacks the mechanisms to closely monitor those who enter archaeological sites illegally. With few heritage workers and few resources, there are many large sites throughout the country that have not been studied or even cataloged as having archaeological material. Even well-known sites have been looted for decades with no security controls or investigations made to catch repeat offenders.

¹ This section of the dissertation is in as a chapter in the volume *Real, Recent or Replica: Pre-Columbian Caribbean Heritage as Art, Commodity, and Inspiration*, along with background information (Alvarez, Hofman, and Francozo, 2021). The volume has been edited by Joanna Ostapkowicz and Jonathan Hanna and published by the University of Alabama Press.

Another significant component of the heritage market is forgers—skilled craftspeople who copy known objects almost identical to those manufactured by the Indigenous groups or those that reproduce objects based on designs dictated by looters, dealers, or what they hear collectors are looking for. Forgeries—copies made of known objects desired by collectors—are both a problem for the market and a response to its demand. Their production is of moderate to high volume, depending on how much people desire an object. The forgeries are also an academic problem because they “deform and falsify our understanding of the past” (Jones 1994, 94).

In many countries, the saturation of the antiquities market with copied objects escalates the prices of uncommon finds (Borodkin 1995, 384). In the Dominican Republic, instead of intensifying looting efforts to locate real finds and obtain higher prices, what occurred was that skilled forgers invented new design traditions. Some craftsmen created and sold enough invented materials that collectors have amassed entire collections under the impression that they had acquired archaeological objects with unique designs (personal conversations with public officials and private collectors). Locally, the desire for pre-Columbian objects led to the development of new contemporary designs all sold as archaeological material or “Taíno,” the umbrella term used to identify the Amerindian culture of Hispaniola in the Greater Antilles (Álvarez, Hofman, and Francozo 2021; Keegan and Hofman 2017; Curet 2014; 2011).

In informal conversations, collectors and specialists commonly assert that forgeries have been sold in the Dominican Republic for more than a hundred years. While no scientific evidence published of such cultural enterprises has yet been published, it is safe to state that looting and forgeries have strongly influenced the country’s collections, both private and public (Figure 6). There have been cases where a collector’s trust in a dealer (who is often directly linked to the looter or forger) is so well established that the exchange relationship lasts for years, during which the collector purchases fake materials over a long period of time as they develop trust in the person bringing them the objects.² When makers or dealers of forgeries were interviewed at length, some admitted to having long-term sales relationships with known collectors and showed examples of what they sold to them.

² Personal interviews and informal conversations with collectors who have wished to remain anonymous.



Figure 6. Forgeries stored at a dealer's house in the eastern region. Photo by author, 2014.

The country's sales market channels also include occasional open-air street markets that sell archaeological stone objects, ceramic fragments, and sculptures of the invented traditions as if they were cultural objects (Figure 7). In their purchase of both genuine and purported antiquities, collectors become active players in this trade, often asking too few questions about the origin of the objects and being moved by a self-justifying need to protect what they view as cultural heritage (Kersel 2012). Even museums become passive players when they unquestioningly accept gifts or purchases of objects from unconfirmed sources. These varied concerns place ethics at the heart of the market discussion.



Figure 7. Archaeological ceramic fragments mixed with forgeries on sale at a flea market in the Colonial Zone, Santo Domingo. Photo credit: Menno Hoogland, 2013. Reproduced with permission.

Over the years, based on comments from different interviews with self-declared forgers in the eastern region of the country, members of the various communities—including collectors, a pattern seemed to form. The following activities seem to regularly take place within the Dominican antiquities market emerged: 1) there are people who participate in excavations, 2) recognize the demand for objects, 3) become more interested in or knowledgeable about the value of archaeological pieces from pre-Columbian sites, and then 4) loot to sell to private collectors. When they run out of locally accessible looted material, they 5) start networking with others in the business and 6) become brokers of the archaeological material. 7) When they have business contacts with people with ceramic- or stone-crafting skills, the forgery begins, and 8) sales are established, sometimes lasting several years.

Neither public nor private Dominican museums with archaeological collections have escaped the negative impact of the unregulated antiquities trade. The acquisition of private collections to form private museums or expand public museum collections, as well as museum personnel acquiring objects to form personal collections, have been for decades an accepted norm in the country.

When interviewing forgers, the most skilled ones tend to say where some of their forgeries are, many times in private collections or museums. In the case of the Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology, there were instances where looters arrived with cars full of stone and ceramic objects—a mix of archaeological material and forged pots and celts—asking for a lump sum to leave the material at the museum. Due to the frequency of such visits, the museum developed a no-purchase policy in 2001. It now gets only about two or three requests per year about “found” objects that people want to sell. However, what has gone up are inquiries to help potential buyers determine whether objects are real or fake.

Summary

This chapter provided the results of the research on the development of heritage legislation and its institutionalization in the Dominican Republic. It informs how Indigenous heritage objects came to be seen legally as part of the national heritage, but how mechanisms for their protection and consideration as an important element of contemporary culture have fallen short. This chapter also discussed issues related to the heritage market that hinder the regulation of archaeological commerce, whereby objects are sometimes freely found in open-air markets, flea markets, and craft shops in the tourism-oriented provinces. The chapter

finally addressed current collecting practices that also continue to shape how Indigenous heritage objects are handled by individuals and groups with interest in the topic, amid very little legislative regulation.

The next chapter details the inventory of Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic. This inventory served as a basis for developing survey and interview questions that were meant to determine how to connect these collections with communities in order to contribute to multivocal engagement, inclusive empowerment, and to the preservation and protection of these collections.

CHAPTER 5. Inventory of Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic

5.1 Introduction

Understanding the scope of Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic required learning about the number of collections in the country, their history, structures, and the types of access they provide to communities. This chapter presents the results of the inventory of public and private collections of Indigenous heritage. The data came from site visits and the review of documents. The information helped create an inventory to better appreciate the characteristics of Indigenous heritage collections, their geographic distribution, and the institutional context of the museums to explore what could be integrated when considering connections between the collections and communities.

The present chapter offers a window into the development of Dominican Indigenous heritage collections in the public and private sectors in order to understand the context in which they have come to exist, where they are located, how they are managed, and who uses them.

5.2 Inventory of Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic

The present chapter addresses the dearth of information about the formation of Indigenous heritage collections, which has resulted in collections materializing but not necessarily becoming accessible to the public. The data gathered from a review of the available documentation and on-site visits have allowed me to compile an inventory of collections based on descriptions found on-site and as part of marketing materials, organizational structures, and public programming information. These findings aid in better understanding the collections' management context when considering the different communities that are interested in accessing them. The next sections present the Indigenous heritage collections under public and private custody, where they are located, and how they were formed. The collections are presented by geographic area (Figure 8), and, to the extent that it was possible to determine, in the chronological order of their creation. The inventory of collections includes institutions that are no longer open for visits and also includes information on collections that have not been opened to the public in order to show the broad spectrum of collection practices that are still observable today.

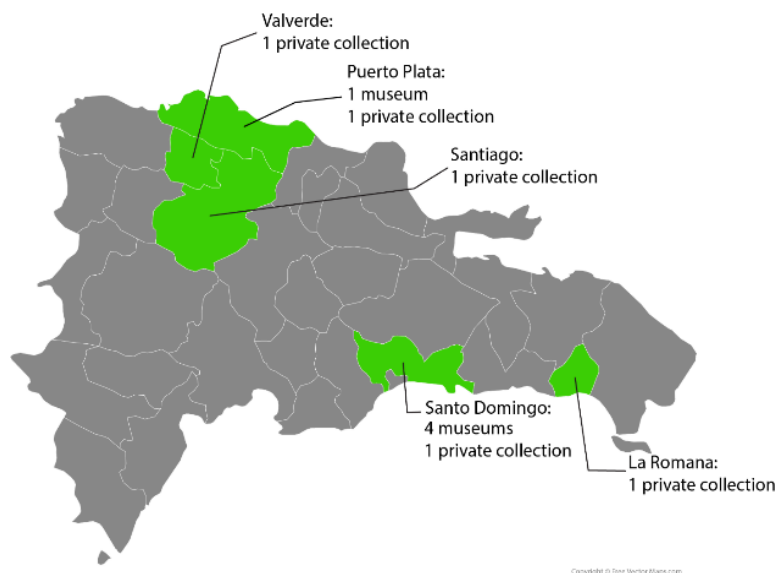


Figure 8. Map with the locations of public and private museums with Indigenous heritage collections open to the public, per province. Map by Finn van der Leden, courtesy of Nexus 1492, 2020.

5.2.1 Public museums and institutions with Indigenous heritage collections

5.2.1.1 *Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Antropológicas (INDIA)*

Located in the National District of the capital city, the Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Antropológicas (Dominican Institute of Anthropological Research), or INDIA, is a part of the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo, which was established in 1527 by Pope Paulo III (“Historia de la Universidad”; UASD n.d.). The institute was created in 1947 as the Dominican Center for Anthropological Research. It originally had the mandate to “intensify archaeological research in the country, prepare the classification, through technical people, of the archaeological material found in the National Museum, and that of the material excavated and of the existing one in private collections” (Pina 1978). Emile de Boyrie Moya became the institute’s first director in 1947 (Boyrie Moya 1954). He is considered the father of modern Dominican archaeology (INDIA n.d.) and combined an engineering and art background with a love for collecting Indigenous cultural material. He became so involved in collecting that he started excavating with a systematic approach, earning him a reputation as the first Dominican archaeologist to use scientific methodology. Boyrie Moya was involved in numerous excavation projects, published books on some of these projects, and wrote articles on archaeological studies being conducted at the time (Periódico Hoy 2004; Silvestre 2010; Peytrequín Gómez 2019). His private collection has been estimated to include over 7,000 pieces (Periódico Hoy 2004) and is one of the largest private collections ever to have been bequeathed in the country (Museo del Hombre Dominicano 1980, 223).

According to the mission statement currently found on displayed posters, the institute is dedicated to conducting research in anthropology and archaeology, publishing research results, offering university courses, organizing field trips, coordinating cultural studies, and maintaining a reference library based on the book collection of Plinio Pina, the lawyer that compiled the first book on Dominican heritage legislation and a well-known collector of archaeological material in the 1970s.

Upon de Boyrie's death in 1967, the objects were moved to what was then the National Museum, which later became the Museo del Hombre Dominicano (INDIA n.d.). Part of his collection was later moved back to the Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Antropológicas headquarters. Records that indicated which objects were selected to stay at the National Museum were not located. The location of documents that pointed to criteria used to determine the objects that returned to the institute was not successful either, evidencing a lack of documentation systems accessible to the public regarding specific information about the history of the collections.

The Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Antropológicas is now a dependency of the Faculty of Humanities of the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (Figure 9). Although the collection is open to the public, it is casually visited by students on the campus, who use the facilities as a study hall and to meet with other students. The institute does not keep visitor statistics, and professors from the Faculty of Humanities hardly ever assign research on topics related to the collection on display (personal communication with the receptionist, May 2014). The INDIA publications on research conducted during the 1970s can be found at the university's main library or the Museo del Hombre library. Though an interview with the director of the institute, José Guerrero, was not possible to schedule, the personnel indicated that the management of the institute is centralized through the university's Faculty of Humanities. It does not have an independent budget, and there are no files of its creation process in the faculty archives, the library, or in the general administration.



Figure 9. Façade and vitrine display of the Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Antropológicas (INDIA). Photos by author, 2016.

5.2.1.2 Museo Panteón Yacimiento Arqueológico de La Caleta

In 1972, the main area near the well-known beach of La Caleta was declared Museum Pantheon and Archaeological Site after many complaints that, for over 30 years, people had been digging up and taking objects found near the pre-Columbian gravesites, where over 300 skeletal remains had been recovered, along with other objects related to the funerary rites of Indigenous Caribbean people (Herrera Fritot and Leroy Youmans 1946) (Figure 10). An archaeological excavation thus took place, headed by the Ministry of Environment and Parks. In 1974, a museum, restaurant, and parking lot were built to contribute to the economic development of the La Caleta community by creating infrastructures that could be used for tourism (Periódico Hoy 2010). Local development was poor in the community of La Caleta, and as early as the 1980s, signs of deterioration were noted by the local community. By the 1990s, the building looked abandoned. The site is now unmarked, and the building that was constructed to guard the human remains from environmental damage has no roof, but barred doors remain in place to stop people from going into the grave area.

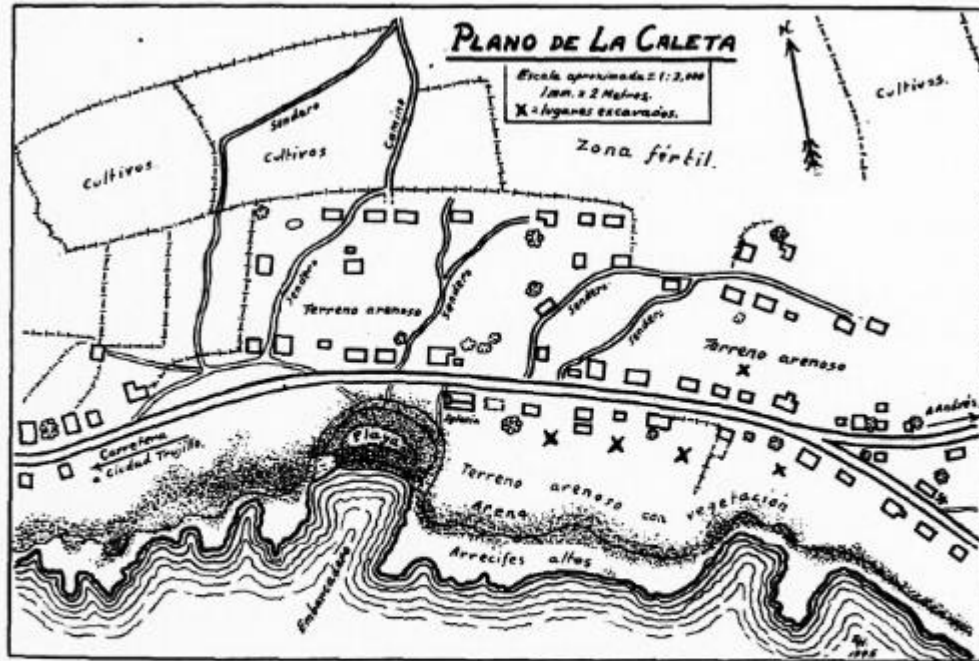


Fig. 2.— Plano del pueblo actual de La Caleta.
Las cruces indican los lugares de las excavaciones principales.

17

Figure 10. Map of the La Caleta Town reflecting the main excavation sites. Map source: Herrera Fritot, R. and Youmans, C. L. 1946. "La Caleta: joya arqueológica antillana." La Habana. Editorial LEX. <https://dloc.com/UF00075427/00001/1x>.

In the year 2000, the ruins of the museum became one of the sites placed under the management of the newly formed Ministry of Culture, but so far, no restoration work has taken place. An unidentified structure in a crime-infested area is all that remains (Figure 11). The only accessible institutional record found during a site visit to the Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods indicated was an inventory list of the types of objects that once were on display at La Caleta (Figure 12). The list shows the museum's initials, a brief description of objects, measurements, and the classification period. Some of the objects that were on display are now found at the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, unmarked.



Figure 11. Roofless and windowless remains of a building that was constructed to protect the Indigenous graves found at the La Caleta archaeological site. Photo by author, 2018.

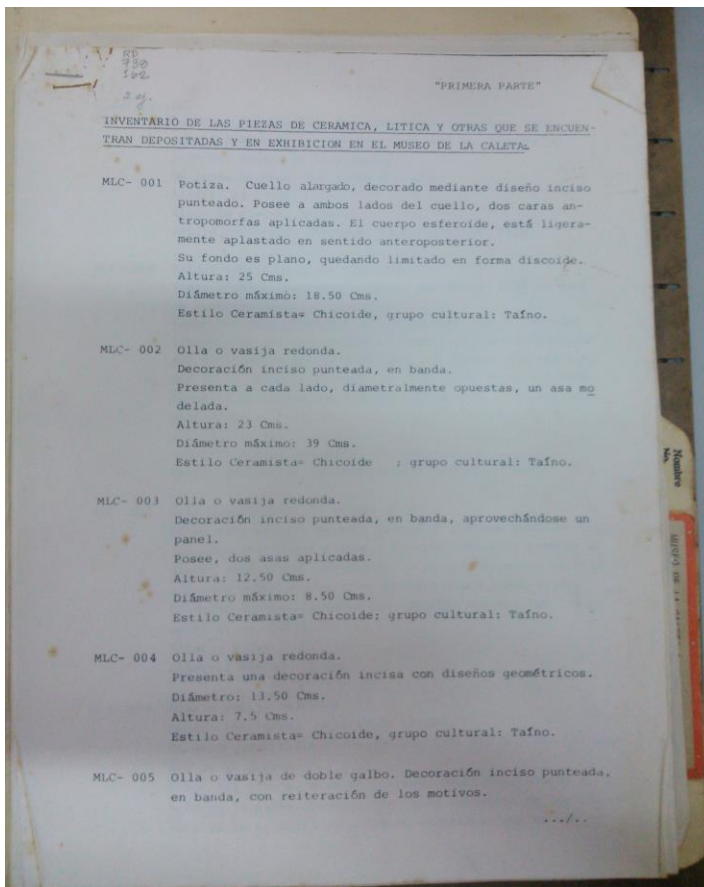


Figure 12. Partial list of the original 1972 inventory done as part of the documentation for objects excavated at the La Caleta archaeological site, on file at the Centro de Inventario de Bienes Culturales. Photo by author, 2016.

5.2.1.3 Museo del Hombre Dominicano

The Museo del Hombre Dominicano (Museum of the Dominican Man), located in the capital city of Santo Domingo, was created by the National Congress (Ley 318 of April 1972), and it opened to the public in October of 1973. It has one of the largest collections of

Indigenous heritage in the Caribbean, with approximately 5,000 objects as part of its permanent exhibition (Francisco 2007).

The museum is housed in a four-story building that is part of Cultural Plaza Juan Pablo Duarte, named after the republic's main founding father. Other cultural institutions in the plaza include the National Theater, the Cinemateca, the Modern Art Museum, and the History and Geography Museum (closed due to major deterioration). The National Library and the Museum of Natural History, which are also in the Cultural Plaza, have re-opened after a long closure due to contamination brought about by the floods during Hurricane George, as the cleaning equipment used to clean the mold-infested building was shared between the museum and the library.

The building that houses the Museo del Hombre Dominicano's archaeological and ethnographic collections was designed by architect José Antonio Caro Alvarez, who became the museum's first director, and who was also part of the first archaeological commission established in the country. The first collections displayed for the opening of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano came from the now-defunct National Museum, which was formed in 1927. The Museo del Hombre Dominicano also received significant object donations from private collector Emile Boyrie de Moya (Vega 2004), whose collection also formed part of the Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Antropológicas, described earlier in this section.

The museum was created under the mandate to oversee everything related to anthropological, ethnological, and pre-Columbian archaeological research (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana 1972, Ley 318). The creation of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano led to a boom in Dominican archaeological research between the 1970s and 1980s, which included excavations, field training for researchers, and publications (Curet 2011).

For many years, the institution served as the leading cultural entity in the country. It had an active research department that organized activities including workshops, conferences, research publications, temporary exhibitions, and carried out international projects. The museum also had programs for the scientific community as well as local community programs in different provinces, and even cultural activities specifically for the staff. The Museo del Hombre Dominicano also developed a newsletter; this publication became one of the most important news sources on the cultural scene of the Dominican Republic regarding archaeological, anthropological, and ethnographic research, with a strong emphasis on

Indigenous heritage research. The newsletter also included a summary of cultural activities taking place in the academic and museum fields.

Since its opening in 1973, the museum has been open to the public for a very accessible fee and offers discounts to schools. For public programming, it has offered guided tours, audio tours, periodic lectures, and publications, as well as occasional temporary exhibitions. Nevertheless, the design of the archaeological exhibition room has not changed in over 40 years. For the past ten years, the research departments in archaeology, anthropology, and folklore have been as dilapidated as the outdated library, and the auditorium has been underused, as the organization of events has lagged behind. The newsletter, a popular publication for decades, now only publishes periodically, when the administration gets partial private sponsorship for its printing, and its distribution has been reduced to giving away a few free copies as well as to the sale of copies at the reception desk.

The general inventory of the archaeological collections, done by Luis Rijo and Harold Olsen Bogaert in 1981, is the most complete documentation of the museum's collection history. However, the Indigenous cultural material is not as well documented as the colonial objects. Part of the archaeological collection came from the National Museum, where the registration methods for the incorporation of artifacts lacked proper documentation, which contributed to the gap in information on the origin of the heritage objects and how they were obtained.

The Museo del Hombre's catalog begins with registration information on the Indigenous cultural material but offers poor information on the provenience of the objects collected or excavated. The objects of Spanish origin, on the other hand, have very detailed card labels that include good photographs and drawings, as well as better details of excavations related to where these objects were found (Soto-Ricart and Rodríguez 1989). Furthermore, the only master's thesis study found on the Museo del Hombre Dominicano is a descriptive thesis that details how the museum functions and the legal mandates that support it (Olsen Boegart 2000). In 2006, the Museo del Hombre Dominicano received a grant from the United States Embassy through its Ambassador's Cultural Funds to improve the lobby presentation and update the permanent collection inventory (Embajada de Los Estados Unidos en la República Dominicana 2017). Nevertheless, it was reported by a staff member that the inventory work was not completed (interview with museum staff who did not wish to be recorded, 2018).

Despite the museum having 46 staff members (Ministerio de Administración Pública 2014), there was no record of activities for the local community surrounding the museum. The official visitor statistics place the number of people that visited the museum at about 36,000 in 2013, with 88% of visitors coming from the school system (Ministerio de Cultura 2014).

In 2017, the Museo del Hombre Dominicano was closed due to the building's deplorable internal condition and the collection displays. The elevators did not work before the closure. The air-conditioning system had been broken for years, and extensive maintenance complaints had been presented to the Ministry of Culture (personal communication with management staff, 2014). The staff on payroll was facing challenges implementing administrative tasks, museum education programs, and audience interaction long before its official closure for renovation. The bureaucratic centralization of the administration and major budget reductions pushed the Museo del Hombre Dominicano into an almost inactive state, diminishing the museum's capacity to design or participate in major heritage research projects. As salaries for the museum researchers are low, very few are able to work on research projects, and even fewer have managed to work on publications, as many have had to find parallel employment or consultancy projects to make ends meet (personal communication with researchers, 2006, 2010, 2014).

After extensive media coverage (Calderón 2009; País Distinto 2017; Acento 2017), including a claim by the people's public defender about the deteriorating conditions of the building and the collection display (Listín Diario 2017), the museum closed its doors for a renovation project. The plans for the remodeling project were presented by the Ministry of Culture in 2018 and led by architects from the President's Office, working with the Presidential Commission to Support Province Development (Santana 2018). Even after elections in 2020 and another party took office, the museums were still closed for renovation.

Despite the good news of the remodeling efforts, there were complaints about how the remodeling had been handled both at the museum itself and at other spaces and other museums in the Plaza de la Cultura. The media has denounced the workers' cutting down of trees and covering the area with construction materials (Rivera 2019), showing disregard for safety measures. Internal complaints include the museum's staff not being apprised of any exhibition design plans, being tasked at the last minute with devising exhibition scripts, and the lack of experienced personnel compiling inventories that are needed to update collection

documentation, as the supervisors of these tasks are working remotely (conversation with museum staff members who wished to remain anonymous, 2017).

At the end of this dissertation research in 2019, the Museo del Hombre Dominicano was still closed. There have been reports, through informal conversations, that the remodeling of the infrastructure has been completed, including new elevators and a new air-conditioning system. As for the new exhibitions' design, it is still not clear when it will be done, nor which experts have been involved in the development of curatorial and museographical plans.

5.2.1.4 Faro a Colón

The monument known as Columbus' Lighthouse opened to the public in 1992 amid a series of worldwide events commemorating the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the Caribbean. The idea of constructing the lighthouse was first mentioned in 1852 (Portal Educando n.d.). The building was initially conceived as a mausoleum to house Columbus's remains, and a contest was held between 1938 and 1930 to select the design proposal (García 1929; Gonzalez 2007). Construction of the cross-shaped monument began in 1948, and it was inaugurated in 1992, compulsorily in time for the international celebrations, and amid fierce protest against the project's colonial symbolism and its staggering cost of 70 million dollars (French 1992). Half a mile long and ten stories high, the lighthouse now houses the contested mausoleum of Columbus's human remains and exhibits a few archaeological objects that were found underwater, particularly at the Manantial de la Aleta (La Aleta Spring) in the Eastern National Park. It also exhibits ethnographical objects from different countries in Latin America donated by different embassies (Navarro 2019).

The building is located on the eastern side of Santo Domingo Province and is open to the public for visits during the week and weekend. Even without any activities for the public—beyond people paying to see the mausoleum and the few exhibition rooms that are still open—the lighthouse reported 98,000 visitors in 2013 (Ministerio de Cultura 2014). This is considered a highly visited cultural institution despite the deterioration of the infrastructure and rising crime in the area.

The lights designed to show a cross in the sky are no longer used due to cuts in operating funds. The lighthouse has limited staff, and very few activities are organized for the public. There is little information on the different exhibition rooms. Despite efforts, the inventory for the archaeological collections was not located at the Center for the Inventory of

Cultural Goods. In addition, there is no official record of what is on exhibition at the administrative offices of the lighthouse monument.

5.2.1.5 Museo del Parque Nacional Histórico y Arqueológico de Villa de La Isabela

Inaugurated in 1992 as part of the 500-year celebration of Columbus' landing in the Caribbean, the museum is located inside the National Historical and Archaeological Park of La Isabela Village, in Luperón, Puerto Plata Province. The Park was declared a national historical landmark in 1969 (Ley 462-69) and is known as the site of the first European village in the New World, where Christopher Columbus established a post in 1493. The archaeological and historical park covers 8 acres, but only 4 acres are open to the public. Inside the park, tourists can walk through the archaeological remains of the first colonial structures and a graveyard. The visit covers Columbus's house, a storage area, military structures, a church, and a watchtower. Though the Europeans settled near areas populated by Indigenous people, there are no visible remains or signage along the archaeological trails that suggest this co-existence based on archaeological or historical studies (Caro Alvarez 1973; Moya Pons 1992). The archaeological site is open to the public every day for a fee that goes to the park's administration. However, no precise information was identified despite looking for visitors' information at the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Environment on how many people visit the park annually. The archaeological remains have minimal signage and lack significant descriptions for visitors to understand the development of the site throughout history (site visit, 2015).

Although archaeological material and human remains from the site had been recovered through several excavations (Veloz Maggiolo 1980; Caro Alvarez 1973; Luna Calderon 1986), the museum's collection was created with objects from local private collectors and those excavated by the University of Florida and the National Parks Directorate (Deagan and Cruxent 2002).

There is a marked architectural separation between the site as a heritage trail and the museum as the space where objects are displayed. Inside the museum building, there are panels with text and images and large cases with objects and the imprints of missing objects. Next to the one exhibition space that remains open, there is a library and lodgings for researchers with approved projects related to the site. Both structures have long been in disuse, as research related to the site is almost nonexistent, and the buildings have been affected by the weather.

The museum and the site are under the Ministry of Culture's managerial supervision, after having been under that of the Ministry of Environment for decades. The Ministry of Culture has no budget for the museum's conservation efforts or for personnel other than the curator to carry out cultural activities (personal conversation with the museum curator, January 2015).

The museum's two original exhibition rooms reflect the passage of time and show signs of deterioration. Despite closing to the public several times, the archaeological objects have continued to remain on display throughout many administrations. Nevertheless, many of the objects in the vitrines and in storage have deteriorated. A visit to the curator at the time in February of 2015, revealed that there was only one exhibition room where most of the collections were displayed. All of the objects in display cases were moved to one exhibition room after a major storm because the second exhibition room was turned into storage for toilets, sinks, and furniture that was salvaged from the researchers' living quarters. Despite the well-documented archaeological research that has taken place on the site, and the numerous plans that have advocated for better conservation and management (Prieto 2012; Flores and Prieto 2014; Flores and Prieto 2015), the site continues to face preservation challenges, and the museum space has taken a back seat among the priorities of past and current strategic governmental management attempts.

The museum has been closed to the public for several years because of the deterioration of the collection displays. The cases had been damaged by rain and humidity, as well as from poor maintenance during periods where there was no director. Archaeologist Diana Peña temporarily served as curator of archaeology. She was hired to continue developing a partial inventory of the materials excavated by the University of Florida. Though reports of the excavation conducted by the University of Florida recount the history of the site and offer an inventory of excavated objects, there are no available inventories of the objects on display in the exhibition rooms on site (personal communication with Diana Peña, January 2015). Information on the museum's collection was not located at the Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods. This governmental institution is supposed to have inventories of all national archaeological collections. In 2007, the Ministry of Culture developed a plan, financed by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation, to preserve the site and restore infrastructure for people to visit on a large scale; in 2011, though the money had been released, the plans remained unimplemented (Agencia de Cooperación Española n.d.; Ministerio de Cultura 2011). In 2013, architect Esteban Prieto Vicioso

designed the “Plan for the creation of value and sustainable management of the La Isabela Historical Park.” This plan was also designed with funding from the Spanish Cooperation Agency and obtained support for implementation through governmental decree 38-17, making it the first plan to be officially approved.

Nevertheless, as time passed by, the curator had living quarters with no running water. She had to sleep with a guard dog in her room due to crime in the secluded area where the museum is located, and her salary was seldom paid on time (site visit and informal conversations with the curator, February 2015). At the end of this dissertation research period, the curator had quit and left La Isabela due to poor working and living conditions. Despite the then president, Danilo Medina, visiting in 2017 along with representatives from the Ministry of Culture—when the local community was promised that the rescue projects would finally be implemented, and a presidential decree was issued to approve the development strategy to rescue the site and implement the plan as a sustainability project (El Caribe 2017)—the community continues to wait.

5.2.2 Public Indigenous heritage collections today

The state has managed five museums with Indigenous heritage collections. These museums fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture, and four remain open to the public. The oldest of these was the National Museum, created in 1927. However, the National Museum ceased to exist in 1973, giving way to the Museo del Hombre Dominicano. Hence, the oldest museum with an Indigenous heritage collection that has continually been open since 1947 is the Dominican Institute of Anthropological Research, managed by the only public university in the country. The last museum formed under the State’s care and built on a site with significant Indigenous settlements and colonial structures was the one located at the La Isabela National Park for the quincentenary celebrations of Columbus’ arrival to the island.

Even when their mandates specifically call for it, public museums seldom conduct research on their own. With the exception of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, all public museums with Indigenous heritage collections either have a small staff or are understaffed. Moreover, the majority of the staff at public museums has limited training in the care of collections or comprehensive knowledge on the history of the island’s Indigenous people beyond what is printed on the labels of the exhibitions.

The displays for Indigenous heritage items in public institutions are old and deteriorating. The majority of collections lack updated documentation. Even for the public collections that have been enriched through scientific archaeological excavations, access to the documentation at the museums is cumbersome and only possible when there are institutional researchers present to help identify which publications cover which excavations. Nevertheless, most public museums have readily available information on the collectors or archaeologists that contributed to the collections' formation or growth.

Public museums with Indigenous heritage collections tend to be in larger cities or cities with important tourism sectors. Santo Domingo, the capital city, has the majority of the public Indigenous heritage collections. Lastly, all public museums with Indigenous heritage collections offer limited public programming on-site, and no programs are offered outside of their geographic zones.

5.2.2 Private museums with Indigenous heritage collections

5.2.2.1 *Sala de Arte Prehispánico – Fundación García Arévalo*

The García Arévalo Foundation was established as a nonprofit association by presidential decree in 1971 (Decree 1155, Pina 1978). The collection, under the care of Manuel García Arévalo and his foundation, has been on display since 1973 and is comprised of some 1,200 archaeological pieces, including objects made out of wood, ceramics, bone, and stone (Lopez 2011). As it is commonly known, La Sala de Arte (The Art Room) is located inside a beverage factory and distribution center in one of the busiest business districts in the city of Santo Domingo. Originally, the Sala de Arte had its corporate-sponsored home in the Embotelladora Dominicana (Dominican Bottling Company), presided by García Arévalo until the business had the majority of its stocks purchased by Brazil's beverage leader AmBev (Aristy Capitan 2017).

The visit to the Sala de Arte has always been free of charge, accessible to visitors only by appointment during the week, but no current or reliable public visitor statistics have been found in any governmental reports. Its programs include guided tours and periodic publications on topics in Dominican history and Caribbean anthropology and archaeology.

This foundation was formed by private collector Manuel García Arévalo, who is the main funder of the Art Room's operations. He is also a renowned businessman and a historian who became well known as a young adult for denouncing the illicit trafficking of

archaeological objects and violations of archaeological sites (Lopez 2011). The García Arévalo Foundation has sponsored publications on topics dealing with Indigenous heritage research and related discussions, while its president has also published his own writings on the development of the Indigenous history of the island, its conquest, and the Indigenous legacy in contemporary Dominican culture (García Arévalo 1988a, 1988b). He sponsors the publication of other writers on the topics of his interest and coauthors books with other well-known historians in the country. The foundation also undertakes the printing of the Museo del Hombre's newsletter and partially funds the Museo del Hombre Dominicano's international conferences on anthropology and archaeology. Through his participation as a key presenter at archaeological events, his publications, and his monetary support for cultural initiatives in the history arena, García Arévalo is considered an important sponsor of activities relating to Indigenous heritage collections.

The museography of the Sala de Arte was designed and constructed over 40 years ago. However, the foundation staff is well trained in conservation, and the displays have been able to survive intact due to consistent maintenance. The staff is also sufficiently well versed in the history of the collection to give guided tours. The only public document available with detailed information on the archaeological objects under García Arévalo's care is the original inventory list, made in 1980 by the Museo del Hombre Dominicano and registered at the Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods.

5.2.2.2 Museo Arqueológico Regional Altos de Chavón³

The Regional Museum of Archaeology, located in the east of La Romana Province in Altos de Chavón, opened its doors in 1981. The museum housed the collection of Samuel Pión, (Figure 13), a collector who had 3,000 objects and fragments on display at his home. For over 40 years, Pión purchased and gathered objects, as was common during the 1960s and 1970s, from different known archaeological sites located in the eastern region of the Dominican Republic. It even became a weekend family activity to go digging for objects to enrich his collection (personal communication with a member of the Pión family, 2002).

³ The researcher was the director of this museum for 19 years. Throughout her administration, she was able to obtain greater access to anecdotal information about the creation of the museum. She was also the creator of several projects implemented for school audiences.



Figure 13. Collector Samuel Pion showing Cohoba wooden idol with part of the collection on the background at his home before 1979. Photo courtesy of the Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology, 2018.

As Pión's collection was a cultural landmark in the city of La Romana, the Bluhdorn Charitable Trust obtained custody of the collection through a sale in order to make it part of the then newly conceived cultural offer within the developing eastern region tourism industry. A museum was built to house the Pion collection in what became known as the cultural and artist village of Altos de Chavón. The cultural and artistic village was part of the largest private cultural initiative in the Dominican Republic at that time, established within the luxury resort of Casa de Campo, managed by the multinational company Golf+Western. Altos de Chavón, commonly known as the city of artists, was designed by Antonio Caro (the same architect that designed the Museo del Hombre Dominicano) and built by set designer Roberto Coppa. The destination was created to offer a high-quality cultural experience for national and international visitors to learn about Dominican culture and exchange cultural and artistic practices.

The museum opened in 1981, during the first stage of the village's construction of the village. The first directors of the museum were Manuel García Arévalo and Patricia Reid Baquero, two of the leading figures working to improve Indigenous heritage discussions in the country in the early 1980s. They organized conferences, lectures, and cultural activities just outside of Santo Domingo.

The Altos de Chavón Cultural Center Foundation is the umbrella organization that oversees the operation of the museum. The foundation also oversees a school of design, with

a campus in Santo Domingo, an artist-in-residence program, and an art gallery. Dominique Bluhdorn, the daughter of the man who conceived Altos de Chavón as a cultural hub for the Caribbean, runs the foundation. She has sustained her father's initiative to contribute to the development of the arts and culture of the Dominican Republic, supporting the foundation for over 30 years.

In 1998, the museum organized one of the largest and most important conferences on Caribbean archaeology in the country, sponsored by the Organization of American States (Veloz Maggiolo 1998). Over the last 15 years, the institution has focused its resources on designing outreach programs and activities for the education community that go beyond museum visits, offering professional development for teachers to improve how Indigenous Caribbean history is taught in schools. They also aim to improve how adults and children learn about Dominican culture, using strategies based on working with objects and hands-on experiences involving arts education. The museum works with grassroots and cultural organizations as well as with public and private schools in urban and rural areas. The museum has established corporate responsibility programs to secure funding for public schools' participation in the museum's programs and for the design and implementation of educational projects.

From 2001 to 2009, the museum participated in cultural exchange projects with museums from Sweden, Africa, Asia, and Latin America through the Samp Intercontinental Museum Network (Samp 2009). Samp projects, funded by the Swedish International Development Agency, required participating institutions to incorporate local community members into their project teams (Azcarate and Balfors 2011). The museum and the network organized international activities and capacity-building workshops for local participating members and museum staff at all levels to improve project management. In 2006, the institution refurbished its museography based on the needs of school audiences. The museum script was revised, objects curated, and illustrations developed to make information on the Indigenous history of the island more accessible to students and tourists; a series of programs were also designed to provide teachers with didactic tools to improve how Indigenous history and culture is taught in schools.

The museum opens every day, and the educational offerings to the national audience continue to focus on programs for students, teachers, and families. A small staff trained in audience development holds activities that include exhibitions, workshops, summer camps

(Figure 14), a discovery room for children, a museum-in-a-box unit to visit schools all over the country, a museum-on-the-web initiative, a catalog of the collection, and a reference library in Caribbean archaeology and Dominican history.



Figure 14. Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology’s 2013 summer camp participants learning about Indigenous hunting and food gathering practices. Photo by author. 2013.

In the period when tourists and nationals could freely visit the Altos de Chavón complex, it reached a visitation rate of nearly 100,000 people per year, with approximately 27% of visitors coming from the school system (internal visitation records, December 2014). The museum’s visitation rate dropped after the Casa de Campo Hotel began charging admission to the complex to cover maintenance costs in 2015. An even more significant decrease in student visitation rates occurred after all schools began being charged USD \$2.00 per student admission in 2017. The museum staff took advantage of the increased coordination that had to take place after the entrance charge was implemented, as the schools had to plan their visits in advance, and staff had to work on more structured educational tours with teachers based on lesson plans and specific interests.

This museum has a poor documentation system. The only official archives on file are the inventory list and contact sheets of the collection initially produced by the Museo del Hombre Dominicano in June of 1979 when it was still displayed at Samuel Pión’s home. However, no accession information has been located. There are no records of purchase or custody transfer beyond the Museo del Hombre Dominicano’s original 1979 inventory of the Pión collection. The collection has objects without registration numbers, and no records have

been found regarding later acquisitions. There are also numerous objects in storage with no markings. This suggests that there was an informal policy of purchasing cultural material and accepting donations without the basic documentation practices to record the purchases. With a new directorship, the position as director of the museum, all purchases were suspended.

A basic inventory of the objects in storage was done in 2002, with students and faculty from the Underwater Archaeology program at Indiana University. A copy of the inventory was deposited at the Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods to complement the original inventory of Samuel Pión's collection. Several attempts have been made to update the inventory of the collections in exhibition and storage, but all attempts have been put aside due to the costs involved in hiring an archaeologist to have the collection professionally inventoried.

In terms of educational services, the museum has prioritized the development of educational programs for over 20 years. The museum was one of the first in the country to develop teacher guides focused on prehistory and archaeology, corresponding to the teacher training workshops implemented by the director at the time, Angel Caba. Caba worked alongside the well-known Dominican archaeologist Marcio Veloz Maggiolo, author of the publication *Prehistoria para Maestros*. To expand the educational services, the museum also secured private funding to develop the series *Mirándonos en el espejo del tiempo* ("Looking at Ourselves in the Mirror of Time"), aimed at instructing teachers and students on how to use Indigenous heritage collections as an extension of the classroom and to supplement the national curriculum for social studies. The series' teacher guide has a summary of Indigenous history as well as activities to do with students before, during, and after visits to any Indigenous heritage collection in the country. The series also offers a teacher training workshop on incorporating Indigenous heritage topics in the classroom and connecting them with other subjects besides social studies. The third product in the series consists in a documentary of an archaeological site in the eastern region of Macao being excavated by a team from the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, which offered snapshots of Indigenous heritage and of how archaeology was practiced in the country; this audiovisual educational resource was directed at students from the fourth through sixth grades of basic education.

The fourth resource developed for the series was the Valija Didáctica (Figure 15, museum-in-a-box): this nationally traveling exhibit uses boxes with replicas and attractive visuals to engage children in the classroom. The museum-in-a-box resource was part of the

educational project that eventually helped in designing a training workshop on how to integrate heritage education for high school level social studies. The training targeted university students seeking to obtain a bachelor's degree in education with a concentration in social studies. The initial workshop was done in coordination with the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo and focused on integrating Indigenous heritage collections into classroom lessons, connecting its contents with language arts, mathematics, science, and history.



Figure 15. Students interacting with the boxes and artifacts from the Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology's Valija Didáctica. Photo by author, 2017.

5.2.2.3 Museo Regional de Antropología – Biblioteca de la Universidad Central del Este (UCE)

This museum is part of the library of Eastern Central University, located in the province of San Pedro de Macorís. The collection is composed of ethnographical objects from the province, as well as Indigenous heritage material very similar to that displayed at the Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology. This museum also opened its doors in the early 1980s, but the exhibition space is in a very deteriorated state and has not been open since at least 1998 (site visit, 2010).

The collector who gathered these materials was José Hazim Azar, the owner of the university. Harold Olsen Bogaert of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano has inventoried the collection (personal communication with Harold Olsen, 2010); however, the university does not have a copy of the inventory in its library or administrative offices. Information about this collection could not be located at the Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods either.

According to the university's website, the collections in the museum are still being used as part of classroom assignments on general anthropology, one of the courses required

by the Faculty of Medicine (UCE 2015). Nevertheless, academic coordinators at the university were contacted but could not confirm whether the collection was being used by students and instructors.

5.2.2.4 Museo Dr. Arístides Estrada Torres – Biblioteca Municipal y Centro Cultural

In 1982, the Dr. Aristides Estrada Torres Museum, located in the province of Azua, in the southwest of the country, was created as one of three main cultural venues sharing the same building, the others being the library and the cultural center. The museum is no longer open to the public, but it had a small collection of archaeological objects, gathered by the medical doctor Aristides Estrada Torres. The collection was described, in one of the newsletters of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, as having about 1,000 objects and was believed to be the country's second-largest private collection, after that of Emile de Boyre Moya (Museo del Hombre 1980). Only part of the collection was on display at the museum in 2002, which could be accessed from the third floor of the building. There were no publicly accessible records about the collections in the library's archives (notes from a site visit made in 2002).

The building that housed the museum, the library and the theater underwent a major renovation in 2012. The library and the theater became part of the Cultural Center Hector J. Díaz. The museum was slated to reopen in the future and be housed on the third floor of the remodeled center, but by the end of this research, information that could confirm its reopening or what happened to the collection was not obtained.

5.2.2.5 Sala de Antropología Signos de Identidad – Centro Eduardo León Jimenes (Centro León)

Located in Santiago Province, the Centro León opened in 2003, with extensive cultural programming and three exhibition spaces that included a collection of anthropological, ethnographic, and archaeological objects; an art collection that originated with the first visual arts biennale in the Dominican Republic in 1964; and a space for temporary exhibitions (Centro Cultural Leon Jimenes n.d.). In addition to the museum exhibitions, the center has digital library services, a cafeteria, a store, an amphitheater, and classroom spaces where diverse cultural activities take place. The archaeological objects that introduce the "Signs of Identity" exhibition originally belong to the collection of Bernardo Vega, one of the directors of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano and a well-known politician, economist, and collector of Indigenous heritage materials.

The center, which is open during the week, has an affordable general entrance fee and discounted fees for students and children. It has about 67,000 visitors a year (personal conversation with former director Rafael Emilio Yunen during a site visit in 2012). Its programming includes guided tours, temporary exhibitions, presentations, video projections, conferences, and workshops.

The Centro León is supported by the National Beer Company, which is owned by the León Jimenes family business consortium, who are long-time patrons of the arts in the Dominican Republic. This is the only known private institution in the country to have hired a consulting firm to design their collection space; through a biannual arts contest that has been sponsored since the 1960s, they selected the firm that would undertake the decade-long project to build a structure to house the León Jimenes family art collection. The firm Consultores y Asesores Profesionales (CAP)—headed by Rafael Emilio Yunén, who later became the center’s first director—transformed the idea of developing a museum into a major cultural center that aimed to serve the Caribbean (Yunén n.d.). The center has a large staff that is trained in educational and cultural program design. The catalog and detailed inventory of its archaeological collection is available to researchers on-site. However, at the time of a visit to the Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods, no Indigenous heritage collection inventory was located to reference the transfer of custody to the León family’s custody. Bernardo Vega’s original inventory found at the Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods was the only document with general information that could be associated with the Centro Leon’s Indigenous cultural material from the island.

This cultural center has also developed a focus on creating educational resources to support the use of its Indigenous heritage collections and their conservation and scientific study. Visitor guides, publications, detailed inventories, and state-of-the-art storage facilities with trained staff are some of the assets that set this institution apart.

The Centro León has also been instrumental in the public dissemination of the Nexus 1492 project results, having been host to two important exhibitions that presented the results of local and international researchers who have worked both in the country and in other Caribbean islands (Centro León 2015).

5.2.2.6 Museo de Laguna Salada – Profesor Tremols

The Museo de Laguna Salada is a locally known collection assembled by Professor José Tremols. The objects are displayed in the former public school teacher’s home, located on Laguna Salada’s main road in Valverde Province.

The collection comprises everything from minerals and family objects to trees planted in his backyard. He started collecting in 1965, initially gathering objects of sentimental value, like the bullets his brother took with him when he fled the militarized capital or personal items that belonged to his father. As he visited museums in other parts of the country during his teaching career, his interests in geology, paleontology, anthropology, and archaeology grew, and his collection grew with them. A significant part of the collection is made up of objects from local archaeological sites that he obtained on numerous digs (Figure 16). Tremols found the sites during extensive nature walks and based on information from his large network of fishermen friends that knew he liked to collect. Although he recognizes that he purchased archaeological objects, he acknowledges that most of the artifacts were obtained from excavations he himself undertook. The collection is not inventoried, although he claims to know each object’s provenance.



Figure 16. Display vitrines of Profesor Tremols’ collection at his home in Laguna Salada. (Photo by author, 2017).

He first set up two bedrooms in his house to display his collection for educational visits after he retired from teaching. The collection has expanded to the yard, where tours begin. The visits have always been free of charge, and visitors have, for the most part, consisted of school groups. As he is almost always in the area near his home, when school groups arrive, the neighbors notify him if a group happens to arrive when he is not at home. Reservations for guided visits can also be made by contacting Prof. Tremols (as he is

commonly called) by mobile phone, as he does not have a phone in the house. The site does not have an electrical backup system to shield it from the frequent electricity interruptions; nevertheless, the groups are always still accommodated since he has enough objects in the backyard that allow him to speak about the entire collection.

Through a local ecotourism initiative, in 2016, Prof. Tremols received support from local community activists and political figures to submit the request to build a museum to house his collection as part of the Ministry of Culture’s Cultural Projects Contest. Several government officials, including the then-minister as well as representatives of the Vice Ministry of Heritage, the National Museum Network, and the Ministry of Tourism, informally communicated that his project would be carried out.

Local community members report that land has been identified for donation by the municipality and that it has been measured for boundary determination: actions that precede the issuance of a property title. Unfortunately, in the researcher’s last conversation with Prof. Tremols, in 2019 (Figure 17), none of the plans for construction had materialized. He confirmed that he was still welcoming school groups at his home.



Figure 17. Profesor Tremols posing on the motorcycle he used on trips to locate Indigenous heritage objects. Photo by author, 2017.

5.2.2.7 Museo Taíno César Estrella Bruzzo

César Estrella Bruzzo has been collecting artifacts since the 1960s and has turned his paternal home—located in Guanatico, province of Puerto Plata—into a private museum (Figure 18), open to the local community. Tourists have been the target audience of the museum to ensure a sustainable income, though group tours coordinated by tour operators are

not being arranged until the infrastructure is ready to provide restroom services capable of handling tourist groups.



Figure 18. Façade and display cases Museo Taino Cesar Estrella, known by the local community as the Guanatico Museum. Photos by author, 2016.

School-aged visitors are the most common public attendees and are guided through the island's geological evolution, Indigenous history, colonial times, and pre-republican period. The exhibition ends with anecdotes about Estrella's collecting interests and family history. Vitrines, located in all the rooms of the house, display fossils and stone objects created by the hunter-gatherer groups found along the northwest coast, shells, and animal bones. Amulets and more elaborate objects created by the later Arawak groups that populated the island are shown in display cases and on walls. Pictures and drawings illustrate Indigenous life. Photographs of objects and family members are also part of the visual narrative of the house.

Estrella systematically searched for archaeological objects for decades and developed a field note archive, along with photographs, that helped produce an inventory of the collection with the help of an archaeologist. With the information he gathered on his digs and the inventory done by the archaeologist he hired, they created a brochure used by the museum guide, who has worked with Dr. Estrella for over 15 years, searching for objects. Although he also acknowledges having purchased objects, he claims many of the objects he did not find himself were instead donated to him, because friends and colleagues know he collects items and maintains the museum. He claims his urge for collecting is comparable to an illness and has professed to have a strong passion for preserving artifacts, claiming to have invested years of his work salary to rescue and prevent objects from leaving the country through illicit traffic.

According to Estrella's accounts, the Ministry of Culture provided very little support when he approached them to request information and advice on how to open the museum. He claims he was given only a list of prerequisites for officially opening, which has only contributed to delaying the service he wants to provide to tourist groups through tour operators. He now has his library available to the public, as well as informational posters, a brochure, and a Facebook page with basic information for those interested in visiting.

5.3 Commercial and private display practices

The Dominican Republic also has nontraditional platforms that showcase the collecting practices of people interested in the country's Indigenous history. Collectors, defined as people who look for specific kinds of objects and select them to satisfy an urge (for pleasure, information, prestige, or investment) (Kersel 2012; Wendel 2007; Sackler 1998; Appadurai 1994; Baekeland 1994; Pearce 1994a; 1994b; 1994c), have underpinned the trade in antiquities in the Dominican Republic since at least 1903 (Pina 1978). Although they have no physical or institutional structures for displaying their collections, some collectors open their houses to students or allow scientists to study their collections. Collectors also view their purchases of antiquities as rescue efforts to prevent the sale of objects to foreign markets (observation based on personal conversations with private collectors throughout the researcher's employment at the Altos de Chavón Museum).

Other private collectors, including those with significant collections in their care, either do not wish to exhibit their collections for fear of appropriation by the state or have not managed to create a museum project to showcase their collection with private sector support. Some high-end collectors, primarily located in urban cities, have purchased a range of objects that include ceramic pots and plates, pestles, mortars, hatches, grinders, stone sculptures, objects they believe have been part of ceremonial rituals, and finally, frequently photographed amulets. During interviews, some collectors expressed an interest in collecting to prevent the objects from being taken out of the country illegally.

Occasional collectors, who can be found worldwide in both rural and urban settings, tend to collect ceramic fragments and small stone artifacts. This tendency was recognized locally every time every time the researcher had an opportunity to meet Indigenous heritage collectors. Collectors from urban areas always pointed out that their interest in collecting could relate to childhood experiences when they found ceramic fragments and small stone objects. Collectors from rural areas tended to indicate they find these items in agricultural

land and keep them because they remind them of old family stories about the Indigenous people.

Restaurants and hotels are nontraditional settings for the display of cultural material. In these commercial venues in different parts of the country, decorators use archaeological objects in their establishments for the enjoyment of customers. Objects found in these settings include fragments of ceramics, stone pelts, and mortars, and pestles. The display of these collections, usually small, varies from objects being placed in vitrines to being mounted on walls or simply displayed openly, scattered throughout hotel lobbies or restaurants.

Other spaces where displays of Indigenous heritage collections or exhibitions on the topic can be seen include nonprofit unincorporated citizen-run organizations and commercial businesses that specifically aim to attract or serve tourist groups. Small displays of Indigenous heritage objects are found in some of these businesses as decorations for their customers to enjoy.

5.3.1 Museo de Arte Taíno

This gallery-like space, located in the historical sector of the city of Puerto Plata, has an exhibition of objects to illustrate the country's Indigenous history for tourists. It opened in the 1980s to serve increasing tourist demand as cruise ships began arriving in the city. The researcher visited the gallery in 2001. However, after phone and research about the city's events it could not be confirmed if the space was still open to the public.

5.3.2 Conquista Park

This thematic park presents the Dominican Republic's history based on diorama storytelling, from the day before the arrival of Christopher Columbus to the first encounter scenarios. Although a free on-site Taíno artifact museum visit is advertised (Conquista Park website 2018), during a site visit, the researcher was able to confirm that the objects displayed in the museum area are, in fact, copies. The current owner also indicated during a short conversation that the objects in vitrines were copies purchased from various sources.

The dioramas used are originally from the Taíno Park that was located on the Nagua-Samaná highway in the Samaná Province, a tourism hub largely visited by Europeans. The Park was created by a long-time French resident of Las Terrenas. After the original owner passed away, the dioramas and the collection were acquired by another French national living in the Dominican Republic. The new owner commented during the informal conversation,

that he had been living in Puerto Plata since the 1980s and moved to La Altagracia Province after purchasing land to install Conquista Park on the then newly inaugurated Autopista del Coral (the Coral Highway), the highway connecting to most of the all-inclusive and high-end touristic resorts in the country.

As listed on its website, Conquista Park has 247 life-size sculptures representing 27 scenarios that depict Indigenous life and the encounter with the Europeans. The site offers self-guided audio tours in six different languages and also advertises guided tours for school groups. As this research ended, the Park was moving to a more strategic site in Bayahíbe, still within the La Altagracia Province. The move places the park closer to the all-inclusive hotels in the municipality, which maintains one of the highest international tourism occupation rates in the country (InfoTour 2019). This strategic move can be interpreted as a continued effort of the private sector to capture international tourists in a zone that is already well known for its white sand beaches.

5.3.3 Museo Taíno Sabana Grande de Boyá

This private-sector initiative is listed as part of a local development plan to establish an ecotourism route, spearheaded by the Touristic Cluster of the Monte Plata Province, an economically deprived area in the Dominican Republic (Diario Digital RD 2019; Museo Taíno Sabana Grande de Boya 2018). The museum seems to be located near the town's central park, but the researcher was not able to confirm its location or obtain information regarding the details of the collection despite phone calls made to the municipal office in Monte Plata. A YouTube page links to a video where part of the collection can be viewed, along with crafts and historical objects displayed with the Indigenous heritage collection.

5.3.4 Museo Taíno Magua Ojo de Agua, Salcedo

A grassroots community initiative spearheaded by a group of young activists, this museum project, located in the Hermanas Miraval Province, was presented to the Ministry of Culture's National Contest for Cultural Projects, and was listed as pending execution for the third annual call of the contest (Ministerio de Cultura, 2018). As it stands, concrete signs of execution include the presence of a wooden house in Ojo de Agua, Salcedo—where the museum will house collections—and a Facebook page with basic information about the project. The volunteers behind the project post their periodical activities, like workshops or meetings, on social media.

5.4 Private Indigenous heritage collections today

There are more museums in the private sector that feature exclusively Indigenous heritage collections, while public sector museums generally have collections related to other periods of Dominican history as well.

There are five private museums with Indigenous heritage collections open to visitors. Two other private museums have been closed to the public for over 20 years. The three largest private collections open to the public have accessible documentation at the Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods. To a large extent, the documentation consists of basic inventory lists that do not necessarily reflect how the collections have grown over time. The Centro León and Dr. Estrella's collections have had archaeologists actively conducting research on their Indigenous heritage collections or enriching the inventory information available to the public. The two museums that remain closed have not deaccessioned their Indigenous heritage collections or given them away. They just have stopped receiving visitors because their displays are not in an acceptable state for public view.

In terms of the locations of the Indigenous heritage collections under private care, three of these institutions are situated in either large, tourism-oriented provinces or in populated industrial zones. The two publicly accessible collections that remain in the collectors' family homes are in rural areas but also have hopes of eventually receiving tourist groups from nearby provinces that focus on tourism.

Summary

This chapter presented the results of the inventory of Indigenous heritage collections based on information obtained from site visits, documentation available at the different institutions, and information found digitally via the internet, as noted in the methodology. Through the creation of an inventory of Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic, an opportunity to understand the scope of the collections at a national level was provided. The inventory is a way to assess which collections have closed to the public, which ones currently exist, and what they are comprised of. The development of this inventory permitted to understand the ways in which the open collections have been made available for visitation and gathered a basic understanding of how they are managed.

Chapter 6 presents the findings from surveys, interviews, and participant observation regarding attitudes and access to Indigenous heritage collections.

CHAPTER 6. Community attitudes and access to Indigenous heritage collections

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the surveys administered and interviews conducted with members of various communities, and notes from participant observation activities that were carried out to explore how communities are able to access Indigenous heritage collections. It also discusses how the collections are being managed, and how technology can play a role in providing greater access to and protection of the collections. The collected data were analyzed to answer the research questions regarding access to collections. The results serve as the foundation for the discussion in the next chapter.

The data addressed the study's general objective of learning how Indigenous heritage collections in both public and private custody can be made better accessible to communities. Secondly, the inquiry aided in identifying the different communities that can access these collections. Lastly, it helped identify what attitudes communities have toward Indigenous heritage collections.

6.2 Access and attitudes toward Indigenous heritage collections

The research questions regarding access to and attitudes toward Indigenous heritage collections were posed through a combination of surveys and interviews administered in different parts of the Dominican Republic. Participant observation was made possible during different activities held in connection with the Nexus 1492 project in the northwest of the country. The results of the surveys and interviews, as well as the participant observations, revealed basic but necessary ways in which communities connect with Indigenous heritage collections and contribute to their care and protection.

6.2.1 The survey

This qualitative study relied on the survey of convenience groups—groups of people willing to freely answer questions—located at hand in geographic areas where there are collections of Indigenous heritage or Indigenous archaeological sites accessible to the public.

The study targeted the participation of people from: the education community (teachers and university professors, university students, and high school students); the heritage community (managers and administrators); the governmental community (current and former public officials), as well as local community members living near archaeological

sites and museums. The effort yielded 515 volunteers who responded to survey questions in five provinces in the Dominican Republic.

The 24-question survey took an average of 15 minutes for participants to fill out. It contained four types of questions that addressed the following:

- a) basic demographic information and tendencies in visiting Indigenous heritage collections;
- b) interest in, meaning, and the value assigned to Indigenous heritage collections;
- c) possible uses of Indigenous heritage collections and the information generated from them; and
- d) the use of communication technology by those responding the survey.

6.2.1.1 Basic demographics of respondents

The respondents' demographics were surveyed at the end of the questionnaire but are introduced at the beginning of this section to provide a general picture of their background and an overview of the people who participated in the survey.

Age range n=515		Count
Question 22-A	18 to 25	285
	26 to 35	101
	36 to 45	45
	46 to 55	22
	More than 55	19

Table 2. Age range of survey respondents.

60.38% of respondents were between 18 and 25 years of age, 21.40% were between 26 and 35 years of age, 9.53% were between 36 and 45 years old, 4.66% were between 46 and 55 years of age, and 4.03% were over 55 years old.

Gender

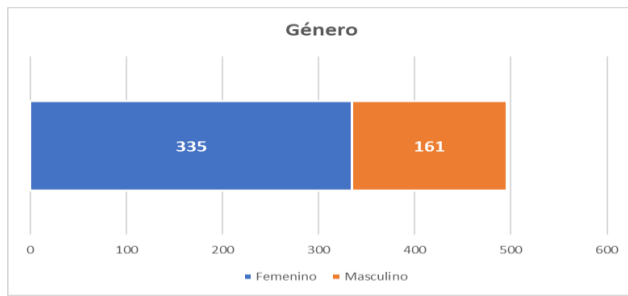


Figure 19. Gender of survey respondents. Image by author, 2018.

67.54% of respondents were female, and 32.46% male. The higher percentage of females is probably due to a greater willingness to take time to respond the survey.

Occupation

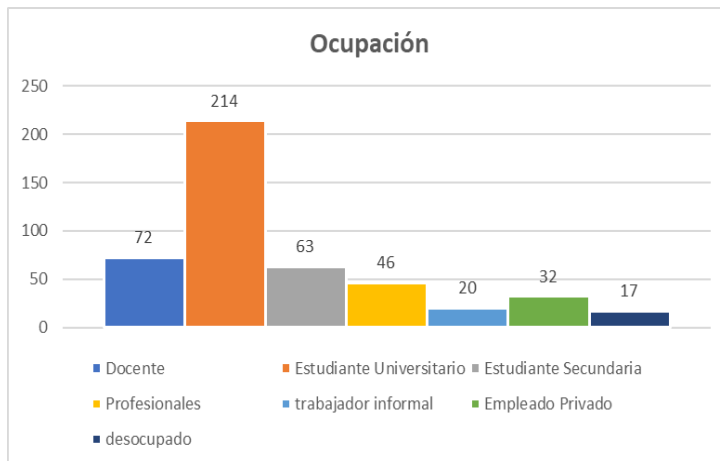


Figure 20. Occupation of survey respondents. Image by author, 2018.

Respondents' occupations were categorized as follows:

Teachers, 15.52%

University students, 46.12%

High school students, 13.58%

Professionals, 9.91%

Informal workers, 4.31%

Private employees, 6.90%

Unemployed, 3.66%

No response, 8.70%

Among the northwest and central areas of the country, the respondents in Santiago were between 26 and 35 years of age, professionals, or private employees, and 80% were female. For Puerto Plata, 40% of respondents were high school students, 17% were teachers, 12% were professionals, 21% were informal workers, 25% were private employees, and 7% were unemployed. All survey respondents in these areas were people approached out of convenience because they were near a museum or archaeological site.

The respondents in Santiago consisted of museum personnel, hence the high percentage listed as professionals or private employees. The largest percentage of survey respondents in the province of Puerto Plata were students and teachers. The rest of the Puerto Plata respondents were from the local community surrounding La Isabela Historical and Archaeological Park.

In the eastern region, 76% of respondents in La Altagracia were 18- to 25-year-old female students. In Valverde Province, 88% of respondents were from the education sector, i.e., students and teachers; 70% were female. In La Romana, 56% of respondents were art students, 20% were schoolteachers, and 14% were private employees.

In La Altagracia Province, all respondents were university students from the Universidad Iberoamericana, specifically the Punta Cana campus for tourism and hotel administration studies. Similarly, the majority of respondents in La Romana were art students at the university level, namely from the Chavón School of Design. The respondents from Valverde were mostly local high school students.

In Santo Domingo, 70% of respondents were female, 24% were professionals, and 66% were university students.

6.2.1.2 Provinces with Indigenous heritage collections and the types of communities that participated in the survey

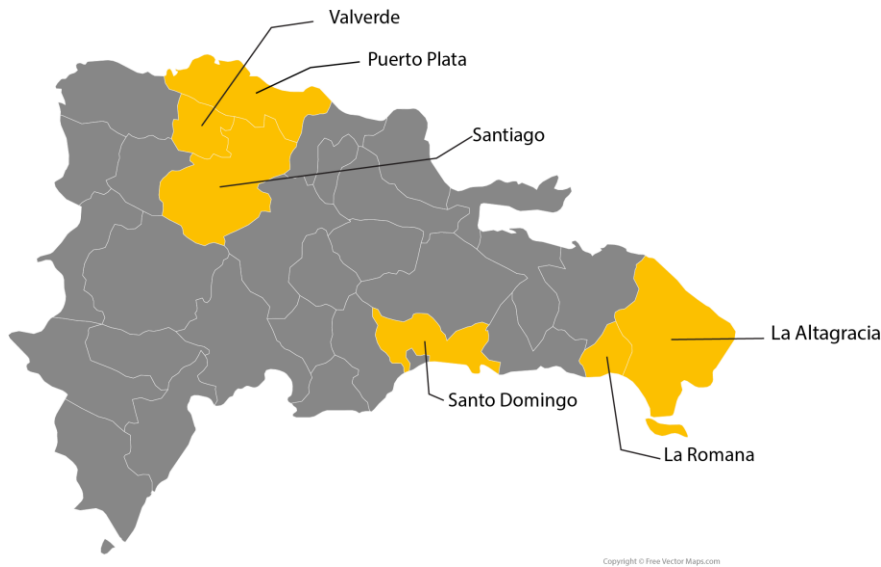


Figure 21. Map that shows the provinces where the survey was administered. Map by Finn van der Leden, courtesy of Nexus 1492, 2020.

La Romana Province. Number of surveys obtained: 163. The survey was administered in this province because it has one archaeology museum with an Indigenous heritage collection open to the public.

- 28 schoolteachers pursuing a certificate in art and folklore, sponsored by the La Romana campus of the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, completed the survey.
- 90 art students from the Altos de Chavón School of Design completed the survey.
- 45 surveys were completed by regular citizens around the central area of La Romana city.

La Altagracia Province. Number of surveys obtained: 69. The survey was administered in this province because there were known archaeological sites along the province's coast and rivers, and because of its proximity to the archaeological museum in La Romana.

- 69 hotel and tourism administration students from the Punta Cana campus of the Universidad Iberoamericana completed the survey.

Santo Domingo, National District. Number of surveys obtained: 130. The survey was administered in the country's capital city because it has three well-known institutions with Indigenous heritage collections open to the public.

- 77 surveys were administered to anthropology students and faculty from the Universidad Católica de Santo Domingo.
- 53 regular citizens from the city center completed the survey.

Puerto Plata Province. Number of surveys obtained: 47. The survey was administered in this province because it has two Indigenous heritage collections open to the public.

- 16 surveys were completed by regular citizens in the town of La Isabela.
- 31 surveys were completed by high school students and teachers in the town of Guanánico.

Valverde Province. Number of surveys obtained: 101. The survey was administered in this province because it was the area of interest of the Nexus 1492 Project, and because it has one Indigenous heritage collection open to the public.

- 10 surveys were completed by schoolteachers at the El Molino elementary school in Loma de Guayacanes.
- 45 surveys were administered in the Cruce de Guayacanes by elementary school teachers, high school students, and regular citizens.
- 46 students and high school teachers completed the survey in Laguna Salada.

Santiago Province. Number of surveys obtained: 5. The survey was administered in this province because it has one private Indigenous heritage collection open to the public. It was completed by 5 staff members of the museum that houses the collection.

6.2.1.3 Visiting habits, values assigned, and access to Indigenous heritage collections by responding communities

The data collected from the completion of surveys concerned how Indigenous heritage collections are accessed, how they are valued, and what connections can be made

with communities. All 515 surveys were used, even in cases where the respondents did not complete all questions. The purpose of using surveys with empty questions was to record as many answers as possible for as many questions as possible, even if this meant only a partial answer in some sections. It was anticipated that not all respondents would complete all questions due to the length of the questionnaire.

Visiting habits

The respondents' habits of visiting Indigenous heritage collections were measured by asking whether they visited museums with such collections, which ones they visited, and what they did during the visit. For those who indicated they did not visit such museums, they were asked to identify why. Overall, the participants reported having visited museums with Indigenous heritage collections through school.

The survey's first question aimed to determine whether or not respondents visited museums with Indigenous heritage collections.

Of the 515 people surveyed, 66.21% reported having visited museums with Indigenous heritage collections.

In Santo Domingo, the capital and National District, 81.61% of respondents indicated having visited museums with Indigenous heritage collections, followed by La Romana Province, with 69.14%; Puerto Plata Province, with 68.09%; Valverde Province, with 50.51%; and La Altagracia Province, with 49.28% of respondents having visited museums with Indigenous heritage collections.

Respondents over 55 years of age had the highest positive response rate to having visited such museums, at 89%. The group of 18–25-year-olds had the highest negative response rate; 42% of respondents in this age group indicated not having visited these museums.

Museums visited

The respondents that indicated having visited a museum with an Indigenous heritage collection were asked to select from a list to indicate which museum they had visited.

What museums have you visited?		
n=515		Count
1- B	Museo del Hombre Dominicano	78
	Centro León	23
	García Arévalo o Sala de Arte Prehispánico	0
	Chavón	86
	La Isabela o El Castillo	15
	Guananico o Cesar Estrella	5
	Otro	42
	More than one museum	29

Table 3 Museums visited by survey respondents.

28.06% of people who responded to the question indicated having visited the Museum of the Dominican Man in the National District; 8.27% had visited the Centro Eduardo León Jimenes in Santiago Province; 30.94%, the Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology in La Romana; 5.40%, La Isabela Museum in Puerto Plata Province; and 1.80%, Cesar Estrella Taíno Museum, also in Puerto Plata. 15% of respondents indicated having visited other museums.

In Santo Domingo, the most visited museum among respondents was the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, with 59.77% having visited; 12.64% of Santo Domingo’s respondents had visited the Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology, and 4.60% the Centro León. Further, 16.09% had visited more than one museum; 6.90% had visited other museums. Twenty-nine survey participants reported having visited more than one museum.

In La Romana, 71.43% of respondents reported having visited the Altos de Chavón Museum; 6.12% had visited the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, 7.14% the Centro León. Further, 8.16% had visited other museums, and 7.14% had visited more than one museum.

In Valverde, 22.86% had visited the Museo del Hombre Dominicano; 20%, the Centro León; 5.71%, the Altos de Chavón Museum; 5.71%, the Cesar Estrella Taíno Museum; 2.86%, La Isabela; and 2.86%, reported visiting more than one museum. 40% of respondents indicated having visited museums not listed in the survey.

In Santiago, all 5 respondents reported having visited more than one museum, including the Centro León.

In La Altagracia, 32.14% of respondents reported having visited the Museo del Hombre Dominicano; 14.29%, the Centro León; 7.14%, the Altos de Chavón Museum.

Further, 7.14% had visited more than one museum, and 39.29% had visited museums not listed in the survey.

Of the respondents aged 55 and above, 25% had visited the museum at La Isabela in Puerto Plata, and 33% had visited more than one museum.

Among 46-55-year-olds, 44% had visited either the Museo del Hombre or the museum at Altos de Chavón.

Activities during visits

Respondents who reported having visited a museum with an Indigenous heritage collection were also asked to indicate, from a list, what they had done during their visit; this was meant to obtain an idea of how the respondents spent their time on museum visits. They were allowed to select more than one answer if they had done more than one activity.

In selecting from the list of activities, 22.64% of respondents reported having gone to the museum as part of a mandatory school visit; 7.06% went to the museum on their own. Further, 23.84% had taken a guided tour, while 6.66% had preferred an audio tour. Other activities undertaken while visiting the museums included having participated in a workshop (7.06% of respondents); 9.99% attended a lecture; 10.39% went to the museum to meet with friends; 2.40% purchased books; 6.79% went to the store; and 3.20% indicated that they had done activities that were not listed.

Per province, the activities that respondents undertook during museum visits included the following:

	Santo Domingo	La Romana	La Altagracia	Puerto Plata	Valverde	Santiago
Mandatory visit	31.75%	25.82%	26.97%	6.10%	12.33%	16.67%
Self-guided tour	5.69%	9.39%	15.73%	0%	1.37%	41.67%
Guided tour	22.75%	21.60%	28.09%	26.83%	25.34%	16.67%
Workshop	4.74%	6.10%	2.25%	13.41%	10.27%	16.67%
Audio tour	5.69%	7.04%	6.75%	2.44%	9.59%	8.33%
Lecture/ Conference/ Seminar	8.06%	12.21%	4.49%	8.54%	14.38%	0%
Met with friends	10.43%	7.04%	5.62%	19.51%	13.70%	0%
Purchased books	2.37%	0.47%	1.12%	3.66%	5.48%	0%
Visited the store	4.74%	3.29%	7.87%	19.51%	7.53%	0%
Other	3.79%	7.04%	1.12%	0%	0%	0%

Table 4. Activities performed by survey respondents during their visits to museums.

The responses show that mandatory school visits and guided tours are the main activities that survey respondents in most provinces engage in when attending a museum, except for respondents in Santiago. For this province, most respondents indicated doing a self-guided tour at the museums they visited.

The northern provinces show higher participation in museum workshops than the eastern provinces. The Centro León in Santiago has a richer calendar of events on offer.

Reasons for not visiting

Respondents who reported not having visited museums were asked to indicate their reasons by selecting from a list. This question was included to help determine potential barriers to visitation.

For the 173 individuals who indicated they had not visited a museum, distance (24.33%) and time (25.33%) were the factors they cited. Not having a companion for the visit was the reason for 16.67% of respondents; 19.67% answered that transportation was a difficulty; and 1.33% indicated having an unspecific reason not to go, while 7.67% claimed reasons not listed in the survey. Another 5% of participants indicated not having any interest in attending museums.

Per province, the reasons for not visiting museums remained constant for most respondents, the most cited factors being time and distance.

Important aspects

What aspects of IHC do you consider important?		
n=515		
	Count	
2-A	How old objects are	432
	Aesthetics	317
	How objects were made	381
	Material	342
	Familiar use	58
	Find no relation	10
	Have no interest	20

Table 5. Aspects of Indigenous heritage collections that survey respondents consider important. Respondents were able to select more than one option.

Respondents were asked to select which aspects of Indigenous heritage collections they considered important; this allowed me to begin understanding their attitudes toward these collections, regardless of whether or not they had visited a museum.

Of the survey respondents, 27.69% cited the antiquity of Indigenous heritage objects in museums as an important aspect; 20.32% also indicated the objects’ aesthetics to be important. Another 24.42% cited the importance of knowing how the objects were made;

21.92% indicated that the material of the objects was important, and 3.72% considered the objects important because they were familiar with their uses in their everyday lives.

Further, 0.64% indicated having no relation to the objects, and 1.28% had no interest in such collections.

In all provinces where the survey was administered, the top four answers for most respondents were how old the objects were, their aesthetics, how the objects were made, and the materials with which the objects were made.

Benefits

To further understand the respondents' attitudes, they were asked to indicate, on a Likert scale, the degree of benefit they considered Indigenous heritage collections to have for the community.

In response, 61.46% of respondents considered Indigenous heritage collections to be very beneficial to the community, 28.60% considered them beneficial, and 4.87% considered them somewhat beneficial.

Another 4.67% of participants indicated that the benefit was neutral, and 0.41% considered Indigenous heritage collections to be of no benefit to the community.

Most of the respondents per province considered Indigenous heritage collections to be beneficial or very beneficial to the community.

Personal interest in the collections

What interests you personally about IHC?		Count
n=515		
4-A	Everything	50
	Use	19
	Fabrication	55
	History	152
	Indigenous beliefs	6
	Way of life	40
	To understand our society	29
	Beauty of the objects	24
	For it to be exhibited in its place of origin	2
	Other	27
	Nothing	16

Table 6. Aspects of Indigenous heritage collections that personally interest survey respondents.

When asked to list what interested them personally about the collections, 11.90% indicated that everything was of interest to them; 4.52% were interested in their use; 13.10% were interested in how the objects were made; and 36.19% were interested in the history that can be learned from the collection.

Further, 1.43% indicated an interest in Indigenous heritage collections as a way to learn about Indigenous beliefs; 9.52% were interested in learning about the Indigenous way of life through the objects. Another 6.90% cited the collections as important to understanding contemporary Dominican society; 5.71% were interested in the beauty of the objects; and 0.48%% expressed an interest in having Indigenous heritage collections exhibited in the objects' place of origin.

Another 6.43% selected other reasons for their interest in Indigenous heritage collections, while 3.81% indicated that nothing interested them personally about the collections.

Value of knowledge

In another Likert-scale question, respondents were asked to indicate how important they considered knowledge of Indigenous heritage collections for the economy, the creation of policy, and understanding Dominican society.

How important do you consider knowledge about the Indigenous heritage to be for:		
The economy n=515		
		Count
5-A	Very important	210
	Important	150
	Somewhat important	80
	Neutral	53
	Not important	14
The creation of cultural policy n=515		
5-B	Very important	239
	Important	176
	Somewhat important	59
	Neutral	31
	Not important	3
Understanding Dominican society n=515		
5-C	Very important	316
	Important	117
	Somewhat important	50
	Neutral	19
	Not important	2

Table 7. How important survey respondents consider knowledge about Indigenous heritage to be for the economy, the creation of cultural policy, and for understanding Dominican society.

- a. For the economy, 41.42% considered it to be very important, 29.59% important, 15.78% somewhat important, and 10.45% neutral; 2.76% considered it unimportant.
- b. For the creation of policy, 47.05% considered it to be very important, 34.65% important, 11.61% somewhat important, and 6.10% neutral; 0.59% considered it unimportant.

- c. For understanding Dominican society, 62.70% considered it to be very important, 23.21% important, 9.92% somewhat important, and 3.77% neutral; 0.40% considered it unimportant.

Most of the respondents per province considered Indigenous heritage collections to be important or very important for the economy, for the creation of public cultural policy, and to understand Dominican society. This question was included specifically to help determine whether a prioritization of the topics could be recognized.

Importance of open visitation

Of the survey respondents, 71.43% considered it very important to have Indigenous heritage collections open for visitation. Another 18.45% considered it important; 5.95% somewhat important; 3.97% neutral; and 0.20% considered it unimportant.

Per province, most of the respondents considered it very important to have Indigenous heritage collections open for visitation.

Better understanding

Do you feel that having visited an IHC helped you to better understand who you are?		Count
n=515		
7-A	Yes	237
	Maybe	88
	No	121
How?		
7-B	Knowledge	136
	Improved learning	4
	Value collections more	6
	Better interpretation	1

Table 8. What survey respondents say about a visit to Indigenous heritage collections helping them understand who they are.

Of the survey respondents, 53% felt that visiting an Indigenous heritage collection helped them understand who they are, which was a slightly lower percentage than those who considered the collections important to understanding Dominican society.

Another 19.73% felt that it possibly helped them to better understand who they are, and 27.13% felt it did not help them.

For those that felt it did help, 92.52% listed knowledge as the main benefit of having visited an Indigenous heritage collection; 2.72% indicated that it helped them learn more; 4.08% indicated having learned to better value Indigenous heritage; and 0.68% indicated having obtained a better interpretation of who they are.

In most provinces, over half of the respondents felt that visiting an Indigenous heritage collection helped them to better understand who they are, except in La Romana and La Altagracia, where opinions were equally divided as to whether it contributed to this regard. The majority of respondents in the provinces of La Romana and La Altagracia were university students.

Volunteering

Of the survey respondents, 40.48% were interested in volunteering to create community-oriented activities; 28.06% were possibly interested, and 31.46% were not interested in volunteering.

For those interested in helping to create activities, 27.27% would be instructors, 12.12% would be guides, 10.10% would give workshops, and 7.07% would help with the organization of activities. Another 26.26% would make general contributions, while 11.11% listed other ways to volunteer; 5.05% said they would volunteer but have no time, while 1.01% indicated having no interest despite initially indicating that they wanted to volunteer.

There were more people interested in volunteering to create activities for the community in Puerto Plata, Valverde, and Santiago—over 53% of respondents—while in Santo Domingo, La Romana, and La Altagracia, there were more people who were either not interested in volunteering or not sure if they would volunteer. Volunteers would be required to donate their time for the implementation of cultural and educational activities.

Level of access

Of the survey respondents, 87.73% of survey participants would like to have access to more Indigenous heritage collections.

As for why 80.40% believe it would give them more knowledge on the topic of Indigenous heritage, 0.75% believe it would improve how the topic is taught; 0.75% think it can help increase their understanding of the cultural heritage of the nation, and 11.06% listed other reasons.

A further 12.27% of respondents indicated not wanting to have more access to Indigenous heritage collections; 7.04% indicated they have no interest in the topic.

In each province where the survey was administered, respondents indicated wanting to have access to more Indigenous heritage collections, with over 62% of people believing it would lead to acquiring more knowledge.

Ways of connecting with heritage

What would make you better connect with ICH that are under the custody of museums?		Count
n=515		
10-A	Understand how objects are cared for	291
	Understand the origin of objects	406
	Examine the materials with my hands	239
	Understand Dominican history in-depth	333
	Use the collection as inspiration	210
	Research about Indigenous history and our culture today	316
	Participate in workshops related to the Indigenous heritage	131
	Contribute with my thoughts and comments about exhibitions or plans	50
	Learn about public policy and heritage management	60
	Have the right to use the images of the objects	48
	Learn more about the Indigenous heritage of the Americas	140

Table 9. What survey respondents say would make them better connect with Indigenous heritage collections museums under the custody of museums.

Of the survey respondents, 13.08% indicated that learning how to care for Indigenous heritage collections would make them feel more connected with their heritage. Learning about their origins would make 18.26% of participants feel more connected; 10.75% would want to be able to examine the objects to feel more connected; 14.97% wanted to understand Indigenous heritage collections better; and 9.44% would want to understand the objects' use better. Further, 14.21% believed that having access to more research would help them; 5.89% would want to participate in workshops related to Indigenous heritage collections; 2.25% would like to contribute with thoughts and comments about exhibitions; 2.70% would like to learn about public policy and cultural management; 2.16% would like the right to use images

of objects; and 6.29% would like to learn more about the Indigenous heritage of Latin America to feel more connected with collections in the custody of museums.

Per province, what would make respondents feel more connected with Indigenous heritage collections were the following:

The value of activities

- a. Arts and crafts: 62.65% of respondents thought having activities related to arts and crafts at museums would be of high value; 29.72% thought it would be of sufficient value; 4.62% thought of it as having some value; 2.81% felt neutral about it; and 0.20% thought there would be no value in having arts and crafts activities at museums.
- b. Cultural events with explanations: 53.65% of respondents thought having cultural events with explanations about Indigenous heritage at museums would be of high value; 34.00% thought it would be of sufficient value; 8.45% thought of it as having some value; 4.02% felt neutral about it; and 0.20% thought there would be no value in having cultural events with explanations about Indigenous heritage at museums.
- c. Dance and theater: 50.81% of respondents thought having activities related to dance and theater at museums would be of high value; 30.04% thought it would be of sufficient value; 13.10% thought of it as having some value; 5.24% felt neutral about it; and 0.81% thought there would be no value in having dance and theater activities at museums.
- d. Material accessible through the internet: 55.26% of respondents thought that museums making material about Indigenous heritage accessible through the internet would be of high value; 26.11% thought it would be of sufficient value; 10.73% thought of it as having some value; 7.09% felt neutral about it; and 0.81% thought there would be no value in museums making material about Indigenous heritage accessible through the internet.

Respondents in all provinces ranked it as high value or sufficient value to have activities related to arts and crafts, cultural events with explanations, dance and theater, and material accessible through the internet. Over 60% of respondents in Puerto Plata, Valverde, and Santiago considered most of these activities as having high value.

Which of the following services that a museum with Indigenous heritage collections can offer, in your opinion, are most important to serve the needs of the community? n=515		
Information material about objects through:		
12-A	Text labels or images	229
	Books	345
	Flyer	188
	Catalogues	287
	Magazines	286
Cultural programs for:		
12-B	Adults	407
	Children	401
	Seniors	162
	Women	112
	Outside of the museum	214
Workshops on:		
12-C	Care of heritage objects	366
	Education and archaeology	340
	Community participation	229
	Art, history, and archaeology	341

Table 10. Most important services museums with Indigenous heritage collections can offer to meet the needs of the community.

- a. Informational material about objects: 17.15% of respondents considered labels and images to be an important source of information about objects; 25.84%, books; 14.08%, brochures; 21.50%, catalogs; and 21.42%, magazines.
- b. Target audiences of cultural programs: 31.40% of respondents considered it important to offer cultural programs for adults; 30.94%, for children; 12.50%, for elderly adults; 8.64%, for women. Further, 16.51% of respondents considered it important to have programs outside the museum.
- c. Workshop themes: 28.68% of respondents considered heritage conservation an important workshop theme; 26.65%, education and archaeology; 17.95%, community participation; and 26.72%, art, history, and archaeology.

Most of the respondents per province considered it important that museums offer the services listed, reflecting similar percentages.

Challenges to accessibility

Of the survey respondents, 31.31% think the main challenge for museums in making their Indigenous heritage collections more accessible is related to finances; 28.63% think it is personnel issues; 21.94% think the challenge is making people understand the value of the collections; 10.50% think it is related to exhibition design; and 7.62% think it is a challenge to show people how the collections can be used.

Per province, there was a similar distribution of answers as to what respondents considered the main challenges in making Indigenous heritage collections more accessible.

Interest in activities

- a. Visiting an archaeological site: 55.02% of respondents were very interested; 28.31% were interested; 10.24% were somewhat interested; 5.02% felt neutral about it; and 1.41% were not interested in visiting an archaeological site.
- b. Learning how the objects from the collections were made: 51.10% of respondents were very interested; 33.87% were interested; 10.02% were somewhat interested; 3.41% felt neutral about it; and 1.60% were not interested in learning how the objects from the collections were made.
- c. Learning about Indigenous rituals, ways of life, and foodways: 44.22% of respondents were very interested; 35.09% were interested; 9.53% were somewhat interested; 6.49% felt neutral about it; and 4.67% were not interested in learning about Indigenous rituals, ways of life, and foodways.
- d. Experiencing how archaeological research is conducted: 42.91% of respondents were very interested; 33.00% were interested; 11.34% were somewhat interested; 7.89% felt neutral about it; and 4.86% were not interested in experiencing how archaeological research is conducted.
- e. Helping to design an exhibition to bring more people to the museum: 37.12% of respondents were very interested; 32.66% were interested; 13.59% were somewhat interested; 8.11% felt neutral about it; and 8.52% were not interested in helping to design an exhibition to bring more people to the museum.
- f. Developing crafts inspired by Indigenous designs: 38.45% of respondents were very interested; 39.97% were interested; 14.31% were somewhat interested; 7.36% felt neutral about it; and 4.91% were not interested in developing crafts inspired by Indigenous designs.

Respondents in all provinces indicated being interested or very interested in the listed activities. Visiting an archaeological site was the top activity of interest, with respondents from Santiago and Puerto Plata being the most interested in this activity.

Dissemination of information

What is the best way for you to receive information about cultural activities?		Count
n=515		
15-A	Telephone	163
	Email	248
	Printed flyer	179
	Social media	365
	Newspaper	68
	Radio	103
	TV	210
	Through friends	79
	Other	16

Table 11. Survey respondents' preferred way to obtain information about cultural activities.

Respondents indicated that the best way for them to obtain information on museum activities is as follows: phone, 11.39%; email, 17.33%; printed flyers, 12.51%; social networks, 25.51%; newspaper, 4.75%; radio, 7.20%; TV, 14.68%; through friends, 5.52%; and other ways, 1.12%.

Per province, similar percentages of respondents gave answers concerning the best ways for them to obtain information about cultural activities.

Use of computers

Do you use a computer?		
16-A	Yes	464
	No	37
Where?		
16-B	Office	141
	Home	445
	Internet café	71

Table 12. Survey respondents' use of computers.

Of the survey respondents, 92.61% indicated they use a computer. Specifically, 67.73% use one at home; 21.46% use one at work; and 10.81% use computers at an internet café.

The same pattern of use was observed for most respondents in the different provinces, except in Puerto Plata, where only 72.73% used computers; however, the distribution of where they used computers was similar to that of the overall survey.

Internet access

Do you have internet access? n=515		
17-A	Yes	489
	No	16
How?		
17-B	Computer at home	419
	Computer at the office	149
	Computer at an Internet café	89
	Computer at a friend's house	139
	Unlimited Access through my mobile phone	337
	Only Access to Facebook through my mobile phone	74

Table 13. Survey respondents' access to internet.

Of the survey respondents, 96.83% indicated having access to the internet. Specifically, 34.71% have access from a home computer; 27.92% have access through unlimited mobile internet; 12.34% through their office; 11.52% go to a friend's house; 7.37% go to an internet café to connect; and 6.13% have internet through their mobile phone with exclusive Facebook access.

Per province, most of the survey participants reflected similar percentages: most accessed the internet through a home computer, followed closely by mobile phones with unlimited internet access, except for respondents in Santiago and Puerto Plata, where unlimited access through mobile phone was the primary way for respondents to connect.

Information in digital form

What type of information do you think is important to have available in digital format? n=515		
		Count
18-A	Scientific research about the objects	375
	Inventory of collections	228
	Photographs of objects with descriptions	383
	Map with Indigenous cultural resources per region	312

Table 14. Important information to have available in digital format according to respondents.

Of the survey respondents, 29.51% considered it important to have digital images of the collection objects; 28.89%, scientific research on collection objects in digital form; 24.04%, a digital map of cultural resources; and 17.57%, collection inventories in digital format.

Per province, similar percentages were reflected in the respondents' answers on the types of information they found important to have in digital form.

Free access to digital resources

How important do you think it is to have information on Indigenous collections in digital format available free of charge?		Count
n=515		
19-A	Very important	303
	Important	131
	Somewhat important	29
	Neutral	28
	Not important	1

Table 15. How important survey respondents think it is to have digital information about Indigenous heritage collections available free of charge.

Of the survey respondents, 61.59% found it very important to have digital information about Indigenous heritage collections available for free; 26.63% found it important; 5.89% found it somewhat important; 5.69% felt neutral about it; and 0.20% did not find it important to have this kind of information digitally available for free.

Survey respondents in all provinces answered that it was important or very important to have digital information about Indigenous heritage collections available for free.

Convenience of digital resources

Digital books were considered the most convenient digital resource by 29.66% of respondents; 28.05% considered databases the most convenient; 25.75%, digital magazines; and 16.55%, CDs.

Similar percentages hold for respondents in the individual provinces.

Other experiences and opinions on how to connect

This question was open-ended. Respondents had an opportunity to freely write what else they thought would help them connect with Indigenous heritage collections. Their answers were analyzed and those that chose to write their opinion and had similar answers were placed in categories that expressed the similarity of responses.

What other experiences or opinions do respondents have regarding how the community can connect with CPI?		Count
n=515		
21-A	Have information available via a digital blog or web	22
	Better education	60
	Have the collections in more accessible places	11
	Promote collections in different communities	35
	Better support to institutions	7
	Allow visits to archaeological sites	14
	Other	25

Table 16. Other experiences and opinions survey respondents have regarding how the community can connect with Indigenous heritage collections.

Of the survey respondents, 34.38% felt that education efforts regarding the care of Indigenous heritage collections needed to improve; 20.11% reported that information on these types of collections needed to be better promoted in different communities; and 12.64% believed that information about the collections should be made available on websites or blogs. Further, 8.05% think visiting archaeological sites can help communities connect with Indigenous heritage collections; 6.32% believe Indigenous heritage collections should be displayed in more accessible places or the original places where they were found; 4.02% believe the government should better support the care of collections; and 14.37% have other opinions.

Similar percentages are found among respondents in the individual provinces, except in Puerto Plata. In this province, respondents found visits to archaeological sites similar in importance to having collections displayed in more accessible places so that the community may better connect with Indigenous heritage collections.

6.2.1.4 Analysis of survey results

The survey results showed that most of the respondents were from the education community, largely female, and had previously visited a museum with an Indigenous heritage

collection. The respondents that had visited museums with Indigenous heritage collections did so, as expected, on a mandatory school visit or guided tour. Time and distance were the main prohibitive factors for those that had not visited such a museum.

Respondents from La Altagracia Province had higher rates of visits to the Museo del Hombre Dominicano in Santo Domingo and Santiago Province. These rates were higher despite La Romana's archaeological museum being closer—only 30 minutes away from the Punta Cana campus. This could be due to the fact that most of the students who responded to the survey were from a university whose headquarters is in Santo Domingo, despite having a campus in Punta Cana. The variation in responses between provinces reflects a higher rate of mandatory school visits for the National District, as the Museo del Hombre Dominicano is located in a section of the capital with significant transportation access. The higher rates of mandatory visits further show that the respondents' main channel of access to Indigenous heritage collections is through the formal school system. This trend shows that such visits tend to focus on the well-known collections that have coordinated visit protocols in place to accommodate large school groups.

The value of understanding Indigenous heritage collections was reflected in how respondents rated the importance of how old the objects were, how they were made, what materials they were made of, and the aesthetics of the objects. As the respondents indicated, what interested most of them on a personal level was the history that could be learned through the collection. The collections were primarily considered to be very beneficial to the community and very important to understanding Dominican society, while about half of the respondents indicated feeling that the visit helped them to better understand who they are. Most of the respondents also considered it very important to have the collections open for visitation. Surprisingly, less than half of the respondents were interested in volunteering to create activities for the community, and the majority of those who considered volunteering were more interested in helping with educational activities.

The survey results show that many of the respondents consider Indigenous heritage collections “beneficial” or “very beneficial” to the community, and knowing about an object's history, age, aesthetics, and production are important and interesting details to learn about. The majority also considered the knowledge that Indigenous heritage collections offer for understanding Dominican society to be “important” or “very important.” This idea is also reflected in the survey opinions that it is “important” or “very important” to have the

collections open to the public. Nevertheless, in some provinces, the number of people who responded to “feeling that a visit to an Indigenous heritage collection helped them to better understand who they are” was lower than for the survey respondents at large.

The difference in the responses between provinces is probably due to participants not reflecting on their answers in depth and acknowledging that a personal understanding is different from a societal standpoint. Although respondents highly estimated the importance of Indigenous heritage collections, this consideration does not necessarily translate to a high willingness to volunteer to create activities for the community, as less than half of the respondents indicated having an interest in volunteering. About half of those who responded positively to opportunities for volunteering chose education-related activities or general contributions. This reflects the percentage of respondents who came from the education sector, mainly teachers. For the provinces where more respondents indicated having no interest in volunteering or were not sure if they would volunteer, age may have been a determining factor in this lack of interest, as the survey respondents from those provinces were younger.

Although the activities that survey respondents indicated wanting to see in museums were ranked as having “high value” or “sufficient value”—arts and crafts, cultural events with explanations, dance and theater, and material available through the internet—arts and crafts were valued the highest, followed by material accessible through the internet. The higher value assigned to arts and crafts could reflect the more hands-on involvement these activities require. The lower-ranked values could reflect the scarcity of information on the subject available through the internet. The importance of freely available digital information also reflects the need for more accessible resources.

Survey respondents confirmed that they believe that society benefits from learning about the objects’ age, materials, how they were produced, and from learning about how beautiful they are considered. Santo Domingo and the province of Valverde are the places where the highest percentages of respondents were interested in the history that can be learned through Indigenous heritage collections. Nevertheless, this interest in history had lower selection rates than the selected responses of wanting to learn how objects were made and about the aesthetic value of the objects when asked what interested them personally. This could be due to the attempt to identify personal preferences and because there were more answer choices to indicate personal preferences.

Most of the people who completed the survey indicated that they were “interested” or “very interested” in participating in activities to learn how the objects from the collections were made. Community members from the area where the Nexus 1492 project did excavations had an interest in learning how the objects found were made. Similarly, positive responses were elicited when the respondents were asked to indicate how beneficial they considered Indigenous collections to be for the community. These positive responses extended to the knowledge generated by the collections and its benefits to the economy, the creation of policy, and understanding Dominican society. Compared to most provinces, more respondents in Santiago answered that “what personally interested” them was “understanding our society through objects.” This could be attributed to the fact that all respondents in Santiago were professionals, with higher visitation rates to different museums. Another explanation for the differences in personal interest could be the length of the survey and the variation of some questions that measured similar variables in order to compare responses to similar questions.

Many of the items left blank came from surveys whose respondents fell into the 18-to-24-year-old demographic, most having indicated they were students. Respondents from La Altagracia Province complained that the survey was too long; they were all university students in the younger demographic category.

Although the majority of survey respondents considered it “very important” to have Indigenous heritage collections open for visitation, less than half expressed an interest in volunteering to create activities for members of the educational, heritage and local communities. A possible explanation for this could be attributed to a lack of awareness about what volunteer opportunities could entail beyond what was specified, namely developing educational activities, or helping with general activities.

Nearly all respondents indicated wanting to have access to more collections because most of them believed it would give them more knowledge about Indigenous heritage. The top knowledge-related activities that would make the respondents feel more connected with the collections were learning about the objects’ origins; understanding the collections better; having access to more research and learning how to care for the objects. Most respondents highly valued the idea of museums organizing activities related to arts and crafts, sponsoring cultural events with explanations about Indigenous heritage, and having materials accessible through the internet. In addition, respondents stated that the most important service museums

could offer was providing informational material about their objects through books and magazines, cultural programs for adults and children, and workshops on heritage conservation, education, and archaeology. The majority also expressed being very interested in visiting an archaeological site and learning how objects from the collections were made. Furthermore, respondents indicated that to connect Indigenous heritage collections with communities, improvements in education about the care of the collections need to be done. Information about the collections has to be better promoted among different communities.

Respondents thought that the main challenges museums faced in making Indigenous heritage collections more accessible were finances, followed by personnel issues, and making people understand the value of the collections. The responses also reflected a preference for social networks, TV, email, and printed flyers as the best ways to obtain information about cultural activities. Almost all respondents indicated having access to a computer and to the internet through their home computer or via their mobile. Considering this level of digital access, a similar percentage of respondents per province answered that the most important information to have in digital form was photographs of the collections, scientific research, and a digital map of cultural resources. The respondents also considered the most convenient digital resources to be digital books, databases, and digital magazines. Most of the respondents considered it important or very important to have this information available for free.

Because most of the respondents were surveyed on-site at La Romana, where the Altos de Chavón Regional Museum is located, this institution recorded the most visits to its Indigenous heritage collection, followed closely by the collection at the Museo del Hombre Dominicano. The Museo del Hombre Dominicano was the museum expected to have the highest visitation rate since the national curriculum includes a mandatory visit to this museum in its lessons on the island's early history.

Respondents were expected to report a higher visitation rate to Indigenous heritage collections in their province of residence compared to those of other provinces. This trend is not reflected in the answers of participants from Valverde Province, where the reported rate of visits to the Museo del Hombre Dominicano in Santo Domingo is slightly higher than it is for Centro León in Santiago, which is closer to Valverde than to Santo Domingo. This could also be attributed to school directors and teachers following the national curriculum's suggestion of a yearly school visit to the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, not being deterred

by time and distance in organizing school excursions. In La Altagracia Province, responses were submitted by students enrolled at a campus of an upper-income university originally based in Santo Domingo, which could account for the significantly higher rate of visits to the Museo del Hombre in Santo Domingo and the Centro León in Santiago.

After mandatory and guided tours, the main activities that visitors participated in at museums were lectures, conferences, seminars, and workshops. Surprisingly, meeting with friends was part of the top four activities at museums. This was unexpected, as it signals independent visiting tendencies for learning (mandatory school visits that were not part of a school tour) and socializing (meeting with friends at the museum), despite the significantly lower visit rates compared to mandatory visits.

Through open-ended responses, survey participants echoed expressed opinions in interviews that improvements in education and care efforts are needed for people to be able to connect with Indigenous heritage collections. The frequency in similar answers to the open-ended questions that were asked to identify additional elements that can contribute to connecting community and collections could be attributed to the influence of the reiteration of information throughout the survey questions and options for responses. Furthermore, the common response or opinion that there is a need to advertise information about Indigenous heritage collections in different communities was another significant association in survey and interview responses. Participants in both the survey and the interviews consider it important to improve education about Indigenous history to better understand how collections were formed. Based on their responses, those surveyed and interviewed also think that it is necessary for museums to advertise information about the collections in their communities.

Overall, the opportunity to survey members of different communities afforded a macro-level look at how communities access Indigenous heritage collections. The responses revealed that survey participants from different provinces consider Indigenous heritage collections important to understanding Dominican history and society. Community access to collections is considered beneficial, as most respondents equate more access with greater learning opportunities. Responses indicate that education-related activities have been and continue to be perceived as the main channels for connecting communities with Indigenous heritage collections. These responses reflect the need to identify ways to remedy the public's lack of information about accessing the collections. Services that respondents indicated as being important to address were books and catalogs, cultural programs for adults and

children, and workshops on conservation and archaeology. These services correlated to the respondents' answers of being "interested" or "very interested," mostly in accessing information about the collections through visits to archaeological sites, learning how the objects were made, learning about Indigenous lifeways, and developing crafts inspired by Indigenous designs.

The narratives affirming the extinction of Indigenous Caribbean cultures were established in the 1970s and continue to remain present in most museums with Indigenous heritage collections. It can be said that this educational narrative is also perceived as static by both survey respondents and those interviewed. Survey respondents identified having a greater understanding of the origins and the overall nature of the collections, having access to more research, and learning how to take care of such collections as the main possibilities for forging better connections with the collections.

6.3 Public and private concerns regarding the management of Indigenous heritage collections

This section presents the results of interviews conducted with public officials and managers in the heritage sector, as well as with private collectors in the Dominican Republic, in order to learn about their opinions regarding heritage legislation, the management of Indigenous heritage collections, and their preservation. A semi-structured interview was designed to obtain information from the community of heritage managers who have been involved in public functions, museum directors, cultural managers, and collectors, as proposed in the methodology chapter. A total of 22 individuals were interviewed. Most participants gave face-to-face interviews; those who sent written responses via email did so because it was difficult to schedule a meeting time or did not show an inclination to meet in person.

For the sake of anonymity, unique numbers were assigned to participants. The numbers 1 through 16 were assigned to public officials and heritage managers; 17 through 21 to private collectors.

6.3.1 The interviews

There were four interview questions with slight variations based on the group of participants being interviewed (see Appendix B for the detailed script with interview questions for each group). The groups were composed of public officials, heritage managers,

private collectors with collections open to the public, and private collectors with collections that are not open to the public. This section presents the interview results based on the type of questions asked to each group of participants. There were questions asked specifically to public officials and heritage managers in order to learn about their backgrounds. Questions about past collecting activities and plans for their collections were directed only at private collectors. All participants were asked about their opinions regarding legislation issues, access to collections, motivations for visiting collections, and governmental support to make collections more accessible. The relevant responses of participants are presented in italics and in parenthesis where emphasis in responses were indicated by participants.

Background and interest of public officials and heritage managers

Most of the participants interviewed have professional backgrounds and university degrees in both heritage and non-heritage-related fields.

Government officials who have held a heritage-related position have done so for the most part by political assignment. The professional backgrounds of government officials include anthropology, architecture, law, chemistry, history, archaeology, art, diplomacy, and sociology.

The backgrounds of the private and nonprofit sector interviewees with Indigenous heritage collections under their care range from well-known businessmen to chairpersons of boards that oversee museums. Their professions range from education to art to business.

All of the interviewed participants expressed having an early interest in cultural or Indigenous heritage issues, either since they were children, through family experiences, or because of early professional or academic projects related to history or cultural heritage. The statements of public officials and heritage managers about their interest in heritage sector work reflected emotional links to early family or personal or academic experiences.

Only one interview participant acknowledged having entered the field of heritage without prior training or the knowledge to manage heritage or heritage-related activities in a museum:

Participant 10: It was an appointment by the director on duty, who wanted me to be by his side for the different projects that he had, but for me to ... become a staff member, the main obstacle was that I came without knowledge, in that sense ... I had never had

museum experience, and they put me in a department that, for me, is the central nerve of the collection, for ME, for MY way of being [verbal emphasis by the participant]. I learned from the site itself—that is, I got in and I learned from the collection; I studied it.

Although this participant had indicated he⁴ had an interest in heritage because he grew up in a family that valued cultural and artistic expression, he recognized that he was assigned to the cultural post because he knew a director. He recognized he was not skilled in heritage management, and that he only became interested after understanding the dangers to which some museum collections were exposed out of negligence. The recognition of political nepotism was minimized by recognizing the value of the collections and his efforts to protect them by learning how to manage them.

Implementation and monitoring of heritage legislation

The interview answers revealed that government officials have a basic knowledge of the legislation that influences heritage management, but more closely involved they were in managing Indigenous heritage, the greater their knowledge of the legislation's shortcomings.

Participant 1: ... Here, the laws exist, and it considers everything, only that nobody enforces it ... and nobody is forced to enforce it, even less so if the people who financially support the culture sector are collectors.

There were some cases where Indigenous heritage managers and public officials indicated that they understood there were no laws to protect heritage, or that the rules were not clear enough to be adequately followed. All the interviewees who have held government positions and recognized that their country has heritage legislation in place believe that the legislation is not being followed, that it is either inconsistent or contradictory, applied with favoritism, or obsolete. Many also indicated that Congress does not have the political will to implement it. Some people believed that the laws to repatriate objects that have been taken out of the country do not work and have not been implemented.

Other interview participants expressed that they do not believe protecting Indigenous heritage is a priority for the Ministry of Culture. Some participants considered the ministry to

⁴ The masculine pronoun has been used throughout all the interview excerpts regardless of gender since all the interview answers are anonymous.

be very centralized in favor of the State and expressed that the Ministry lacks confidence in the private sector.

Participant 12: *The existing legislation is inadequate for the current reality of heritage, dating from 1968. It does not recognize private heritage and does not protect collections.*

Participant 13: *In my opinion, there is an excessive centralization and reservation on the part of the State and the government agencies responsible for implementing legislation for the handling, custody, management, and protection of heritage. Not only from the public vision and administration, but this jealousy is in its stealthy relationship with the private sector that, instead of threading together policies of brotherhood, the public sector sees it as an opponent.*

Considering their knowledge of heritage laws, the heads of nonprofit heritage institutions that care for archaeological collections stated that they do not know enough about the legislation to have an opinion. Still, they expressed the view that the laws and regulations appear to be inadequate and incomplete.

Concerning opinions on how the implementation of legislation and regulations are monitored, all interviewees stated, in one way or another, that there is chaos in dealing with heritage management issues, or that monitoring is virtually nonexistent. There were instances where they stated the legislation was complete, then contradicted themselves when giving opinions on monitoring:

Participant 22: *I understand that the Dominican Republic has good legislation on the protection of cultural property, in addition to the international treaties that prohibit trafficking in archaeological objects to which our country is a signatory. What happens is that the laws are not applied...*

Most participants also stated that the government agencies responsible for monitoring the implementation of laws and regulations do not have staff with the capacity to carry out monitoring at the national level, even in places with archaeological sites or collections that have reported a conservation problem. Interview participants who claimed to know that there is monitoring of heritage legislation also indicated that public heritage officials that have the capability to do it are swamped and cannot cover the entire national territory. The indifference of government agencies was also frequently mentioned as a problem in

monitoring the implementation of laws and regulations. Several respondents indicated that there are very few completed inventories that can be monitored as a standard measure to indicate how the collections have expanded or been reduced:

Participant 1: *It's just that none of that has been done! ... What monitoring has been done here? The collections fly out of the public museums, and we don't know ... I believe that the first thing is that the inventories that exist, if they exist, are obsolete; they are state secrets, and they are not renewed ... Culture doesn't interest anyone ... is always easier than if the sea is calm ... In this case, if we are all regulated, it is easier to know where things are.*

Participant 4: *The Ministry of Culture does not have the qualified personnel ... There has been a lack of political will to appoint people who have been already prepared.*

All but one of the private collectors interviewed was aware of the legislation, which they considered to be for the care of the objects. Still, all those who offered their opinion on monitoring indicated there was none for the conservation of the collections. Most collectors complained that the State did not assist them in their conservation efforts.

The opinions of public officials, heritage managers, and private collectors reveal that poor implementation of the country's heritage legislation and lack of monitoring hinders community access to archaeological collections. The responses signal a lack of comprehensive understanding of how heritage laws and regulations are implemented, and the specific mechanisms to monitor their implementation regarding Indigenous heritage collections.

All the respondents concurred that there is inconsistency in legislative implementation, with most believing that there was no "political will" to enforce the laws or to monitor that people have access to Indigenous heritage collections under private care:

Participant 15: *In the Dominican Republic, with its lack of dependable institutional policies, there has been inconsistency in this legislation. For years, collectors were able to amass private collections with little regulation. During the past two decades, the opposite has taken place, making it difficult for certain museums to participate in international exhibitions due to complex bureaucracy.*

Participant 19: *What monitoring? ... Here nothing is monitored! The state is apathetic and does not tend to protect culture in general ... Its “contributions” are based on populist glimpses through high profile activities...like the ‘long nights of museums’ ... but little institutional protection of heritage [...] Payrolls at the Ministry of Culture [reflect] pure political clientelism ... [There is] nepotism out in the open and without consequences ... positions with high salaries while the forgotten comrades of the party’s base survive with hunger wages, sometimes received with a one- or two-month delay.*

Private collectors and non-governmental heritage managers also agreed in their criticism of governmental entities and representatives not having the “political will” to aid in preserving collections. The Museo del Hombre and other public Indigenous heritage collections were mentioned as examples of how collections under public care show significant signs of deterioration.

Government officials with current posts also expressed a suspicion that there is looting of Indigenous heritage items from archaeological sites since, to their knowledge, there is no monitoring. An interviewee from the Ministry of Culture of a southwestern province expressed significant concerns over forgeries in his area that are sold as original archaeological items. He expressed that this is also the case for looted objects that make it out of the country. In his opinion, the lack of governmental effort to preserve the Indigenous ceremonial plaza near his local community contributes to the lack of care from those that live surrounding the archaeological site. His concerns seemed to suggest that the more community contact public officials have had, the less favorably they assessed the legislation in terms of implementation and monitoring.

Public officials at higher management levels did not seem to have specific knowledge of Indigenous heritage legislation. However, most expressed the understanding that the legislation aids in preventing the illicit trafficking of archaeological objects. They believed that fewer objects leave the country because there is legislation against it. Regarding such monitoring issues, most respondents agreed that monitoring is only done when there is a political will to do it.

For officials whose work relates to cultural matters within the Ministry of Education, one acknowledged having no specific knowledge of legislation related to Indigenous heritage but indicated that he understood the Ministry of Culture has no will make decisions. He also

stated there is no qualified personnel to undertake the monitoring and that there was a lack of interest in implementing any legislation. Another individual interviewed in connection with cultural heritage mainly associated legislation issues with the state's capability to request the repatriation of objects and remove them from local private hands. He believed that not enough effort is made to protect the objects but justified it by reasoning that the State has other priorities because the country is so poor. This perspective coincided with the opinions of fellow officials from the Ministry of Culture. For public officials who had held heritage-related posts in the past, opinions on Indigenous heritage legislation were no more favorable. These individuals' most pressing concerns include outdated laws, protection gaps not addressed by the current legislation, lack of practical implementation guidelines, and centralization.

One former public Indigenous heritage manager, in her very brief written answers, stated that no legislation was implemented, and that monitoring was not done. Almost every former public official expressed complaints about the lack of inventories, the outdated information about the collections, and the lack of supervision over collections in private hands. Almost all former public officials identified deficiency in skills needed to oversee governmental heritage institutions as a significant contributor to the inadequate or nonexistent monitoring efforts. They also cited the state's disinterest, indifference, or lack of will to act as hindrances to implementing legislation. This is congruent with experiences undertaking the review of collections documentation for creating the collection inventories. There were only outdated inventories or none at all. There is no public agency staff assigned to check on heritage collections or review what legal documentation is in place. Only a few outdated inventories were found in the Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods, which is supposed to act as a repository of heritage inventories.

One top heritage manager in the nonprofit sector that was interviewed criticized heritage legislation on Indigenous heritage collections as inconsistent, lacking institutionalization, and currently plagued with bureaucracy. However, he considered himself not fully informed on monitoring issues. The other high-level heritage manager, on the contrary, thought that there were laws, regulations, and norms in place but felt there was no clarity about the consequences for violations such as illicit trafficking, looting, or forgery. She described the legislation's monitoring process as being "incomplete, [and] needing adequate updates to inspire new practices" (Participant 16). Heritage managers seemed to have weaker opinions about implementing and monitoring the legislation compared to how

the regulations affect private collections, presumably due to a basic understanding of how this impacts collection management.

As for collectors with collections open to the public, the range of opinions regarding legislative issues varies. One collector in an urban setting considered the legislation to be beneficial in protecting cultural goods, as he considered it important that the country was a signatory of international agreements that forbid illicit traffic. He heads a foundation that oversees his collection, which has been documented fairly well ever since he started collecting. He also indicated having started collecting because of the indiscriminate looting of sites and saw the *“need to form an archaeological collection to preserve part of this prehistoric legacy and prevent it from leaving the country, as its traces would be lost forever.”* He further indicated that regarding monitoring, the *“Laws were not applied and that there was not enough protection for archaeological sites or caves with Indigenous rock art.”* He also recognized that building collections these days is a risky business since there is a high level of forgeries mixed in with actual archaeological objects for sale.

For collectors who do not open their collections to the public, their opinions reflect a general awareness of the legislation. One of the first collectors interviewed indicated that he “no longer ha[d] anything of importance to show” because he had sold most of what he owned and was no longer collecting due to a lack of funds. Finally, he no longer received visits from sellers. His understanding regarding legislation is that the essence of the law was good, as it declared these objects the property of the state—not of individuals—as a way to protect them. He admitted to not knowing about monitoring Indigenous heritage collections or how the state regulates the public collections. Further, he did not know *“the extent to which this was monitored for private collectors.”* When analyzing the repetition of certain sentiments, either in a single interview or by different interviewees, a pattern of complaint and strong judgment against poor legislative implementation and monitoring was identified. Among the answers it was also recognized strong criticisms against the lack of managerial systems and poor educational quality in programs that should support how Indigenous heritage collections are used to teach the early history of the country.

For the one collector who had opened his paternal house to visitors (free of charge for students), he indicated being familiar with the legislation through the compendium of laws authored by a relative who worked in government. He stated that his main reason for collecting was to stop objects from leaving the country. He further explained that he was the

one who had reached out to the Ministry of Culture, only to be told they did not have the resources to support him. He claimed that the Ministry of Culture only visited to review whether the house was equipped with everything he needed to open for tourists: a guide to the display cases, the inventory, and functional bathrooms. With his collection open to the public, the last collector, who has turned most of his home's living spaces into exhibition rooms for students and local visitors, admitted to not knowing about legislative implementation or monitoring. He did clarify that representatives from the Ministry of Culture had visited after local community members applied for funds from the national contest for cultural projects on his behalf for the creation of a local museum. The public officials had visited him to inform him that the project was selected and that they had gone to identify the land to be donated by the municipality and would then proceed to work on the design plan.

The last of the private collectors who agreed to respond to the interview questions thought the legislation should include provisions to support the creation of regional museums that are self-sustainable. To them, the creation of law 340, the heritage sponsorship law, which passed in October of 2019 (Ministerio de Cultura 2019), could be significantly favorable to aiding the heritage sector. He believes sponsorship incentives would motivate private investment in cultural projects in tourism-oriented zones, as he considers Indigenous heritage a vital attraction. His opinion regarding legislative monitoring was quite unfavorable, as he emphatically pointed out that he collects in order to prevent the objects from being looted from the country.

Private collecting

All collectors of Indigenous heritage material indicated that they started collecting or were interested in collecting archaeological artifacts from an early age, most often linking their collecting desires to an emotional experience related to their family's value of history or related to educational experiences while learning about Indigenous history in school. Two participants infused their explanation with strong emotion:

Participant 17: *I was interested in the topic from a young age ... and from a history class that was taught to us ... so whenever I heard there was a place with sherds, I would go. It always called my attention ... They are really our true ancestors.*

Participant 21: *... That's something that I kind of have in my blood ... It's like I tell you, it's like a fever, a passion ...*

Several collectors expressed that a significant reason for collecting was to prevent objects from leaving the country; they did this either by finding the objects or by buying them. Of the six collectors interviewed, five indicated that they would continue to buy objects each time they are brought in to avoid losing them. One of them acknowledged the purchases at first, admitting that he had spent a fortune amassing his collection and that it was an uncontrollable passion; nevertheless, he later indicated that he no longer buys objects and that he is focused on using his money to open his museum:

Participant 19: *I collect pieces for a very special motive ... **I don't want even one piece to leave the country** [bold emphasis originally added by the participant in the written response] ... Unfortunately, I am almost alone in this project ... Important pieces continue to leave, astonishing pieces continue to show up, with inestimable didactic value, and pieces continue to be extracted in the exterior and sold at laughable prices to then be resold at exorbitant prices.*

Participant 21: *I wish there were people, many people like me, because collectors like ... hey, hey, hey, collectors like me prevent objects from leaving, oh, if I tell you about the piece ... hey, that I, because I don't have money, I couldn't buy it and out of the country they go...*

In general, collectors associated their early collecting interest with early educational experiences that encouraged them to think of the objects as valuable relics of the country's cultural heritage that need protection to avoid people taking them out of the country. Nevertheless, the collectors' self-perception as heritage saviors in the face of governmental indifference to illicit trafficking contrasts with public officials' responses that link private collecting with an undue sense of ownership and hoarding that the government cannot control.

Although most collectors did not openly acknowledge that they continue to purchase archaeological material, two of them indicated that they no longer collect due to the higher costs of purchasing objects, as well as their deteriorating health, which impedes them from going out to the field to look for objects. These two collectors recognized that sometimes their urge to collect felt like an illness, and they were unable to stop their hoarding.

All the collectors expressed having had a desire to have a museum ever since they started collecting adults in order to open their collections so that people could enjoy them.

Participant 18: *Every collector's dream is to have a museum ... but there is no interest from the private sector.*

Participant 19: *It has always been my interest that the pieces remain in national territory, and that my collection can be seen by the world ... if people come here to see it.*

One collector, inspired by his visit to the capital's museums and by having friends who encouraged him to open his collection to the public, transformed his family's home into a space people can visit freely. Another collector showed his collection to visitors who occasionally asked to see it, and often gave talks at schools about the history of the province, bringing his collection along so that students could interact with the objects.

Of the two collectors who openly acknowledged they were actively buying objects; one has been involved in different negotiations to try to open a museum that would house his collection. He indicated he had not been successful due to a lack of interest on the part of businesspeople. The other collector hoped to one day find support for opening a museum in his local community. He has a house full of objects, but he said he is tired of letting anyone he does not know to see his collection because, as he indicated, he is afraid government officials will take it away.

One collector expressed his desperation at not having any private interest in his collection. Another collector hoped to get permission from the Ministry of Culture to finally open the house he turned into a museum, mainly for tourists, as he believed Dominicans are not interested in culture. Negotiations are underway for another collector to move his collection to a new space where the public can continue to visit, but he is expecting support from the government and the private sector.

Two collectors explicitly indicated that they do not trust government officials, especially since the state allowed the main public museum to deteriorate to an extreme level. Others expressed their hopes that the government would honor its political promises of granting permits and building local community museums.

Some private collectors believed that the government should improve tax exemption legislation that promotes sponsorship of heritage activities. These collectors consider the private sector would provide better economic support for the creation of more museums and for sponsoring academic research in archaeology. In their opinion, more economic support

from the private sector would make bureaucracy less burdensome for cultural organizations that depend on government support.

Participant 22: The state has a very significant social burden, both in infrastructure and in concerns related to public health and education, so it is unthinkable that it alone can fulfill all the requirements that cultural heritage demands. Hence the important role played by private initiatives and their support for both artistic and cultural activities under sponsorship schemes [...] We trust that the new laws promoting private tax incentives will encourage the granting of sponsorships to those entities dedicated to the protection and preservation of the nation's historical, monumental, and artistic heritage.

At one end of the spectrum, there are the public officials that expect more rigid governmental control over Indigenous heritage in private hands. At the other end, there are the collectors expecting significant public support to subsidize the care of Indigenous heritage collections because they consider that the government lack capacity to care for its public collections properly.

Government help in accessing collections

Government officials and heritage managers considered the Ministry of Education a significant player facilitating access to Indigenous heritage collections. Most public officials thought that the ministry should make revisions in the curriculum to improve how Indigenous history is taught and to reinforce the importance of museum collections. Participants also opined that the ministry should publish books on the subject, offer more money to students so that they can have better museum visits, and design projects for teachers to continue working on in school after class visits to museums with Indigenous heritage collections.

While some officials and heritage managers believed that the government needs to invest in more cultural programming for both students and communities, they also believed that the state needs to help improve buildings and displays that house public collections and step-up public preservation efforts in museums.

Most participants believed that archaeology experts should lead government institutions with heritage collections and that specialized staff should take care of inventories and support the private sector when necessary. Some felt that museums need to extend their

opening hours, open their warehouses to the public, and promote touristic amenities beyond the sun and beaches.

One government official emphatically stated that the government needs to appropriate collections in private care, as they belong to the state by law. Most individuals that were in public posts or had held government positions either expressed concern for archaeological collections in private hands or felt the government needed to exert more supervision over private collections:

Participant 1: The first thing is putting the house in order [...] so, if we begin building profiles for the positions and filling them with people—not because of whom they know, not because of political favors, not out of convenience, not out of sympathy with other people, but really because they know what to do there, what is there, its importance and value—then we have already partly won, because a person with criteria is not supposed to improvise. They should start with a minimum program for what to do at the institution, and that should be the managing institution so that it has a satellite in all the other provinces, and can then somewhat ease the disorder of managing the archaeological sites, the looting [...] Any tourist here can take anything, and nobody does anything ... People in rural communities warn us that they are destroying a site, and nobody can do anything; there is no coordination with the town halls that have a culture department, there is no coordination with other institutions, with cultural centers [...] It's like everyone is an island, but nobody can do anything because their hands are tied. But the biggest barrier they have is the mental barrier... They are not motivated to doing anything, and if they do, they do not let the others do anything, and if other people do anything, it then becomes a problem.

The interview with Participant 1, which lasted for over an hour, reflected concerns related to the governmental protection of the collection and emphatically criticized the government's lack of action in terms of supervision and hiring qualified personnel. This participant equates the meaning of access to that of protection and sees the government as the entity charged with ensuring the collections' protection. The complaints about governmental inaction in protecting Indigenous heritage collections and sites, as well as political favoritism in assigning people to heritage posts, were echoed in other interviews. Other participants expressed a need for the government to help with access to Indigenous heritage collections by

providing more resources to the education and scientific sectors so that people can better understand the value of the collections.

Some interview participants also see the need for the government to lead in facilitating strategies for how Indigenous heritage collections are exhibited, where they are exhibited, and how to encourage visiting them:

Participant 3: More exhibitions, in airports, multilingual, in the colonial zone ... Go to the radio and TV, bring tourists to museums in tour buses, implement programs in cities of different provinces [...] The private sector wants to help. But it depends on who is at the Ministry of Culture's helm.

Formal education seems to be considered the main area of governmental intervention in improving access to the cultural information that these collections have to offer. Many of the interview responses regarding the types of help the government could provide fall under financial support to museums for improved programming and exhibitions and facilitating cooperative research projects. Nevertheless, curricular improvement in the formal education sector was the most common response to how the government can help improve access to Indigenous heritage collections:

Participant 4: ... In the case of the Ministry of Education, it should design—that is, now that we are in the process of revising the curriculum, [it should] include content or strengthen content that is already there, in such a way that children can go out and get to know, see, look at and, perhaps, develop strategies and follow lesson plans that link them more to their heritage [...] The Ministry can also help educate on how to assess the care and preservation of our heritage and also distribute that information from the school to communities, especially now that large governmental investments in education are being made.

While most interview participants believed that the government needs to lead in educational efforts to improve access, some public officials considered the appropriation of Indigenous collections from private hands the main strategy for improving access to collections due to their cultural value:

Participant 5: There must be more books to disseminate the heritage we have, a heritage that is practically submerged and which, I insist, is in the wrong hands, in the wrong collections, in collections that ... are shown privately, but whose owners do

not even allow many of these pieces to be photographed—for fear of persecution, for fear that they will be taken away, these things that in reality do not belong to them, but which they treasure for what they are, a true treasure of the history of the origins of the Dominicans ...

The urging of appropriation by most public officials reflected their opinions on legislation going unenforced due to lack of political determination more than their concerns over shortcomings in qualified personnel, funding, and political favoritism as expressed by heritage managers and collectors. Simultaneously, public officials outside the capital city also believed that the legislation needs to be better enforced in order to decentralize the access to resources, build greater capacity for developing activities, and having trained personnel in provinces rather than concentrating them all in the capital city. Some of the public officials' answers justified the lack of governmental action in protecting Indigenous heritage collections as a result of prioritizing the use of resources for basic services such as health, food, housing, and security.

Access and motivation for visiting

All interviewees believed that public and private museums have always been accessible through traditional guided tours, mostly for school groups. The majority also believe that their engagement with the collections has been a very passive, unreflective type of access. Some point out that most visitors access Indigenous heritage through institutions in the capital. A visit to the Museo del Hombre Dominicano is a regular, and often compulsory, school excursion. Over time, however, school visits have generally decreased. Some interviewees also indicated other, less frequent ways people have accessed the collections, including through conferences and publications.

Participant 5: ... *[people have had access to Indigenous collections] basically through books and the visits they have made to the Museo del Hombre Dominicano.*

Interview participants expressed that the most common ways people have accessed Indigenous heritage collections are through museums open to the public for visits and the passive contemplation of objects in display cases. All interviewees mentioned visitation directly or indirectly as the main point of access to collections. Other forms of access the respondents listed were through publications, research, temporary exhibitions, activities related to exhibition contents, and conferences. These offerings, however, are seldom found

in museums. One particular collector emphasized having facilitated access to his collection through school visits ever since he began collecting. He also saw the sponsorship of events and publications as a form of facilitating access and creating collaborations with similar institutions or other collectors. All respondents agreed that access to collections through the means they listed was more dynamic in the past. Specifically, the deterioration of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano seemed to symbolize the state's apathy toward cultural heritage issues, as several respondents expressed.

Of the 21 people interviewed, only one referred to public collections that have been closed due to deterioration. This person only casually commented how unfortunate it was that part of the human remains excavated was missing. No one mentioned the closure of the Dr. Aristides Estrada collection, housed in the province of Azua's municipal library. There was no mention at all of the collection that has been under the care of the Universidad Central del Este's anthropology museum, which has been closed to the public since at least 1998, after Hurricane Georges. These museums have been closed for so long that they are not considered part of the publicly accessible collections that were once open to the public. The closed collections, even as the objects are still encased in vitrines or stored within these institutions, they are no longer part of the collective memory that once considered them part of the freely accessible heritage resources the nation owned. Therefore, no one seems to question how to access them or even inquire about the objects' conservation state.

Nearly all respondents complained that the educational and pedagogical content of visits to museum collections was deficient. They complained that guided tours did not offer any type of engagement and that historical content was presented in a linear manner and with little interactivity. Some respondents pointed out that the presentations were too old to connect with a younger audience.

Participant 15: Collections that are in public museums have always been accessible to the public ... through visits. The issue is the physical state of those museums and the lack of modernization in the displays. There are few museums that make an effort to develop exciting programming that attracts a young audience to visit ... Private collections are often hard to view, as they are located in places where visits are by special appointment.

All private collectors expressed that collections need to be better promoted or advertised better and that educational efforts should focus on public schools:

Participant 19: *I understand that it should be considered that the state, at some point, should legislate to promote more private sponsorship in what refers to the collections of private archaeological objects that would allow organizations and companies to deduct taxes if they build private regional museums that take care of objects, or if the companies make monetary contributions for the development of educational programs in schools, colleges, and universities that help teach about the care of national heritage*

Participant 21: *... Dominicans are not interested in culture or museums ... what it needs is education, education, education* (oral emphasis by interviewee).

Government officials and heritage managers believed that better explanations in exhibits and educational programs could help people become more motivated to better understand the importance of collections and assist in their conservation. Other public officials believed that more publications and videos are needed so that schools can have better tools to learn. It was also pointed out that exhibitions should be better designed to make them more attractive and understandable, and to have more dynamic activities with learning experiences at their center.

Participant 15: *Making information about the collections accessible to the viewer both in design and content is very important. Visitors are rarely scholars ... The collections need to be presented in such a way that viewers are absorbed in the story of these pieces. Collections must be brought to life. Direct and simple language that enables the viewer to understand what he is seeing is key, along with modern, fresh graphics. Informative material that provides cultural context that the visitor can refer to as he visits the museum is helpful, as is informative content that bridges the past and present. Making the past relevant to the present has to be a priority.*

Participant 16: *Any initiative that seeks to promote this type of cultural property must be accompanied by a program of activities that inspires people to live each experience as unique and filled with learning.*

6.3.2 Analysis of interview findings

Most public officials and heritage managers who participated in the interviews come from heritage and non-heritage-related professional backgrounds. They all expressed having become interested in the field either through early childhood experiences or early academic

exposure to history or cultural topics. According to the public officials and heritage managers consulted, the focus should be on improving access to Indigenous heritage collections through the formal education system. Public officials also believed that the government needs to assume a more assertive role in enabling people to access private collections.

As with public officials and heritage managers, the private collectors that were interviewed indicated having begun collecting Indigenous heritage objects based on an early interest in the topic through educational or family experiences. Most of them also expressed an interest in exhibiting their collections to friends or through the foundation of a museum. About half of the collectors expressed a desire to have more private support to make their collections more accessible to communities. At the same time, the majority believed that the government needed to increase its support for the heritage sector. In many instances, politically based help was considered neither desirable nor achievable.

Regarding the implementation of heritage legislation and monitoring adherence to it, most participants acknowledged having some knowledge of such legislation, but most believed that no governmental monitoring occurs. In terms of access, all participants believed that Indigenous heritage collections have always been accessible to the public through the museums that openly display them, though further acknowledging that both public and private collections could improve in this respect. Participants listed improved exhibitions, enhanced educational offerings, and more efficient communication in promoting their educational materials to communities as the main ways that could motivate people to learn more about the collections. In one way or another, everyone interviewed believed that the formal school system would be the best vehicle for increasing access and interest.

As expected, government officials expressed a strong desire to have the State expropriate archaeological collections. The public officials considered that such collections should not be in private hands, as stipulated by law, but recognized that nothing had been done about it. Nevertheless, they all agreed that actions must be taken to improve the State's capacity to legislate better before making any appropriations. Public officials also manifested that there is a need for the State to set a better example in the care of Indigenous heritage collections by providing more support to heritage institutions, as well as improving the way this part of Dominican history is taught in school. They consider that it can be done through the formal educational system spearheaded by the Ministry of Education. At the same time, only a few of these public officials advocated for legislative proposals that would allow

sponsorships based on tax exemptions. The stronger support of public officials for more governmental control over private collections and the private collectors advocating for better economic measures that would permit them to improve their care for the collections under their custody shows differences in what each group of respondents considers critical weaknesses or gaps in the legislation.

Although Dominican museums with Indigenous heritage collections are subject to legislative regulation, there is a scarce implementation of the regulations, according to most interview respondents. Despite the legislation drafted to protect the country's Indigenous heritage and the institutions and agencies established for the care of cultural material, even the public museums seem incapable of implementing their regulations in a consistent manner, much less supervising what private museums, or private collectors report. A significant example of this is the Museo del Hombre Dominicano. Under the legislative mandate, the Museo del Hombre is the public institution assigned to supervise all archaeological work throughout the country and the collections under private care. This particular institution, however, is susceptible to the country's political climate. Its upper management tends to be politically appointed and thus depends on which political party is in power. The museum's capacity for monitoring archaeological research likewise tends to change with the political agenda or the individual capacity of the person directing the institution. Besides, the museum does not have an independent budget, and budget approvals are subject to the Ministry of Culture's centralization and political priorities.

All interview participants conveyed a sense of despair in their answers. When asked about their opinions regarding the implementation of the legislation, public sector heritage officials with current posts in heritage institutions expressed that there were no optimal conditions for implementing the legislation. For those that hesitantly pointed out the lacking conditions for implementation, they considered it was due to politicians and lawmakers lacking the will to implement the legislation. Interview participants also believed that poor security, which allowed for the collections' looting and illicit trafficking outside the country, was a significant problem and had seldom been publicly addressed. Another interview participant, an Indigenous heritage collection manager, thought of the legislation as outdated and that too Eurocentric in its protection focus. He qualified the heritage legislation, as it applied to the protection of Indigenous heritage collections, to be out of touch with the Dominican context and unrealistic in its application. Furthermore, another interviewee, also closely related to Indigenous heritage management, indicated that the legislation was often

ignored and that chaos, insecurity, and political clientelism were rampant, while privileges were granted to rich people and politicians who were also well-known Indigenous heritage collectors. The common thread in these answers was the lack of faith in the implementation of the legislation, whether it was due to the evident political favors that benefited private collectors or due to the lack of governmental support for private heritage initiatives to care for collections.

In general, interviews with heritage-related public officials, heritage managers, and private collectors provided an opportunity to explore issues of access to Indigenous heritage collections at a micro-level. Only a minority of the participants interviewed had detailed knowledge of the heritage legislation enacted to protect Indigenous heritage collections. At the same time, everyone consulted agreed that there was no effective State monitoring over the collections. As expected, public officials expressed the need for more State supervision over collections in private custody. In contrast, heritage managers and private collectors believed that there was a need for the State to provide more support for and facilitate collaboration in the care of private collections.

Concerns regarding the care of Indigenous heritage collections

This study found several patterns in interview participants' concerns about the heritage sector. As the answers were analyzed, certain keywords associated with these areas of concern emerged from the data. The information was organized into five main categories based on the following keywords and phrases: protection of heritage, education, heritage personnel, valorization of heritage, and political decision-making processes. The categories were not deemed exclusive, as certain keywords represented different types of concerns, whether expressed by public officials, heritage managers, or private collectors. Moreover, some answers were deemed to be relatable to one or more of the categories of concerns that emerged from the data.

The content of the interview transcripts and the written responses were examined line by line. Several public officials and private collectors gave lengthy interviews, and even when they rambled, this open-ended approach to the information helped to identify key ideas that contributed to the development of the analytical categories. As expected, the data revealed strong emotions and attitudes in the opinions expressed. Most of the participants expressed strong negative opinions about the preservation status of Indigenous heritage collections and archaeological sites. These opinions were generally associated with negative

sentiments about the government's job of protecting both collections and sites. Another theme that emerged amid the frequent harsh criticism was the quality of Indigenous history education at school.

Hence, the two main categories of information obtained from the responses relate to the protection of Indigenous heritage objects under public and private care and the need to improve education about the country's Indigenous history. The additional categories that emerged from the data are related to keywords that reflected concerns regarding personnel, heritage values assigned to collections, and political will.

This section presents the main themes reflected in the participant interview responses:

- **Protection.** Protection is the overall theme encompassing concerns related to the security of heritage collections and legislation. Words and phrases related to protection concerns include: poor or lacking inventories, illicit trafficking, care, conservation, prevention, need for up-to-date legislation, distrust of the state toward the private sector, theft, disappearance, helplessness, disorder, lack of control, deterioration, inadequacy, decay, sadness, lack of implementation, lack of follow-up, outdated exhibitions, looting, forgeries, and opacity of legislation.
- **Education.** Education was a broad theme that emerged as participants discussed the major problems of heritage management throughout the different interview questions. Words related to educational concerns are: learning, family experiences, programs, teaching, collaborations, schools, curricular support, learning, heritage education, lesson plans, theater, films, uninspiring and outdated displays, knowledge generation, promotion, research, publications, didactic materials, Ministry of Education, educational programs, research, and teacher training.
- **Personnel.** Personnel concerns were a theme found in most of the responses about implementing laws and regulations and monitoring adherence to them. Words related to this theme include: lack of capacity, lack of personnel, not enough people, null monitoring, no practical training, and lack of management.
- **Value.** The theme of value emerged from interviewees' statements on the emotional, cultural, or economic value of the collections. Words related to value were: importance, inspiration, indifference, economy, identity, knowledge, modernization, bringing to life, lack of interest, other priorities, unknown collections, transparency, fun, distance, and economic development.

- **Political will.** Political will first emerged as a concern under the theme of protection, but it was specifically cited as a primary concern in numerous responses. These were placed into a separate theme. Words found in statements that refer to political will include: lack of action, clientelism, patronizing, apathy, nepotism, lack of political will, lack of determination, inaction, lack of drive, political interest, inaction, centralization, bureaucracy, state disinterest, lack of strength, insufficient efforts, the privilege of the rich and politicians, overlap in the ministries' functions, waste, international collaborations, and lack of legislative application.

These themes reflect the major concerns that the public officials, heritage managers, and private collectors expressed regarding the preservation and protection of Indigenous heritage collections. In order for museums to establish connections with communities to aid in the preservation and protection of collections, these concerns need to be addressed.

6.4 Participant observation

Loma de Guayacanes and El Carril are the two main areas of archaeological excavation in the Nexus 1492 project. To that end, the researcher was able to act as a participant-observer in their respective communities. The observation allowed me to witness how these local communities expressed their connection with the Indigenous heritage objects being excavated in their territory. Through other activities, participant observation also permitted the researcher to see how the local community members connected with Indigenous heritage collections in the area. Observations also allowed for the identification of patterns on how the connections between heritage and the local community have been developed throughout the project. This last section presents the findings from a total of 15 activities observed.

6.4.1 Community interaction with Indigenous heritage objects

Since the late nineteenth century, the landscapes of the northern part of the country have been studied archaeologically by early international researchers (De Booy 1917; Shomburgk 1854; Fewkes 1891; Krieger 1929), and in greater depth by local researchers later on (Boyrie Moya 1960; Veloz Maggiolo 1972; Guerrero and Veloz Maggiolo 1988). The study of the area helped establish the classificatory method since used to describe Indigenous material culture in the Caribbean region based on styles (Rouse 1939; Guerrero and Veloz Maggiolo 1988).

Loma de Guayacones and El Carril are territorial zones of the Laguna Salada municipality in Valverde Province, in the northwestern Dominican Republic (Figure 22). The zone is near La Isabela, the first European town in the Americas, and the Paso de Los Hidalgos, associated with the Ruta de Colon (see Hofman et al. 2018). This initial conquest trail, linked to the early European invasion, led from Puerto Plata Province to La Vega Valley in the Central or Cibao area (Figure 23).

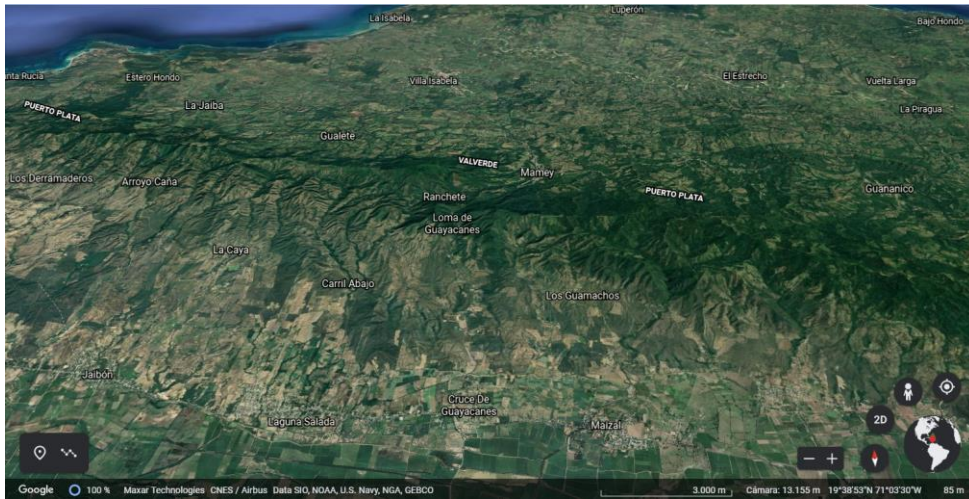


Figure 22. Google Earth map of the Laguna Salada municipality, Valverde Province, 2021 Google Earth Maps: <https://earth.google.com/web/@19.6986551,-71.0544802,305.26970285a,22313.03262771d,35y,4.11742172h,54.91950758t,0r>

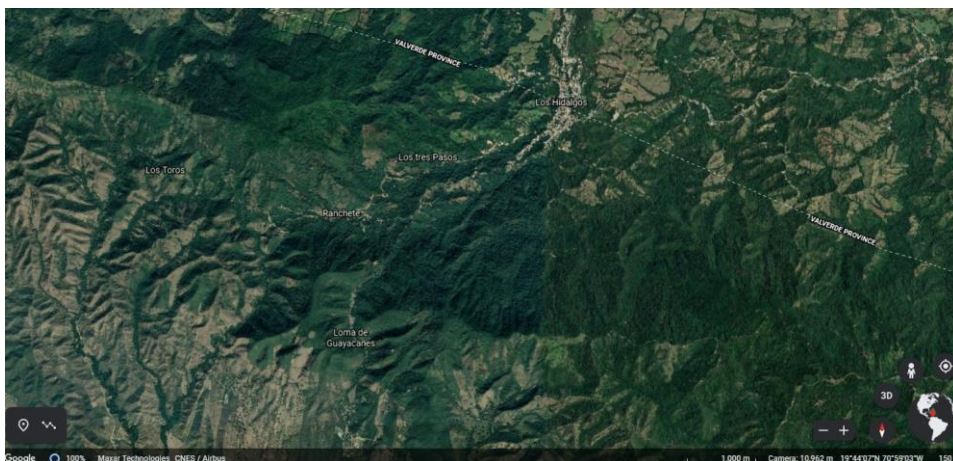


Figure 23. Google Earth map that highlights the Paso de los Hidalgos conquest trail, Laguna Salada municipality, Valverde Province, 2021. Google Earth Maps: <https://earth.google.com/web/search/Paso+de+Los+Hidalgos,+Dominican+Republic/@19.72371543,71.04323388,306.5>

The inhabitants of the municipality of Laguna Salada are familiar with the modern history of the area as being an active location during the Restoration War (the war fought

against the island's annexation by Spain in 1863), as well as being the site of resistance battles against the United States' 1916 invasion (Ayuntamiento Laguna Salada, n.d., Historia). Nevertheless, people mainly seemed unfamiliar with the history of the Indigenous population who lived in the area before the European conquest (based on informal conversations with local community leaders).

Based on the country's 2010 census data, the municipality of Laguna Salada is about 186,000 square kilometers; there are 23,962 inhabitants in all four municipal districts together, 10,425 in the central municipal district alone (Ayuntamiento Laguna Salada, n.d. Demografía). The economy is based primarily on agriculture, and though internet connectivity is listed only at about 4%, approximately 75% of the population uses mobile telephones (Ayuntamiento Laguna Salada, n.d. Demografía).

The City Council website is the primary source of information on the history and demographic composition of the municipality and also lists cultural and touristic information for its inhabitants and any interested citizens. On this site, information regarding the local community's cultural life focuses on the traditional religious festivities of the areas and their Carnival celebrations (Ayuntamiento Laguna Salada, n.d. Cultura). In terms of education, the municipality had about 7,000 matriculated students at the primary and secondary levels in 30 schools for the 2008/2009 school year (Ayuntamiento Laguna Salada, n.d. Demografía).

Since 2013, Nexus 1492 researchers, local partners, and local community members have worked together to develop exhibition materials on the project's results. Scientific and cultural materials have been adapted to various local community spaces to make information about the archaeological research in these areas openly available in nontraditional formats.

6.4.2 Local community meetings and local community members

The collaboration with the local community in the Valverde Province has been an organic development. These collaborations ranged from consultation sessions organized by and with local leaders and government officials, team members participating in the local community's social and cultural life, the coproduction of educational resources with local schoolteachers, and the training and support of young community members (Con Aguilar et al. 2018; Hofman et al. forthcoming). In the latter context, a local community member who began working as part of the excavation team on the site of El Flaco in 2014 became fully involved in acting as a liaison between project activities and the education sector. He later received support to start his secondary education at a local university with a specialization in

social studies. It was important for the project to have local contacts, active and present year-round, to whom the community could turn for questions or requests. He became an active collaborator in the organization of local community activities.

Meetings at archaeological sites, intended to discuss progress in the work on-site, also took place as components of the interaction between the population living near the archaeological sites and the project's team members. These meetings have generally been accompanied by informal, open displays of objects found on-site to show how the information is initially processed with each find. At the end of summer 2013's fieldwork, the first major local community gathering was organized (Figure 24) in collaboration with leaders from Cruce de Guayacanes and Loma de Guayacanes, the municipality, and the administrative unit section surrounding the archaeological site in Loma de Guayacanes, El Flaco. For this meeting, the project's principal investigator, local researchers, and cultural representatives, community leaders, neighborhood associations, and politicians gathered to discuss the main objectives of the project, ask questions, make recommendations for more local involvement, and view the first video documentation, produced by project researchers using drone cameras. The presentations were particularly attractive to the local community members. Some expressed that it was not their first time seeing this type of technology, but their first time seeing an aerial view, from a drone, of the place where many of them were born.



Figure 24. First meeting with local community members from El Molino, Cruce de Guayacanes, Valverde Province. 2013 Photo courtesy of Nexus 1492, 2013.

After the presentation, the participants informally expressed that they understood what an excavation is and how the results are used in archaeological research, thanks to the audiovisual presentations and summary descriptions using everyday language about the scientific techniques being used to study the site. Afterward, yearly meetings were organized to provide annual updates on the fieldwork and lab advancements. As the archaeological work ended at the site of Loma de El Flaco and excavation work began in the nearby community of El Carril, community meetings were also organized on the new site, and open community days were well attended, sometimes even by entire families. At these events, people had the opportunity to examine some of the objects that were excavated, handle some of the tools used in the excavation work, ask questions, and share stories they had heard from elder family members about what was regularly found at the site.

During these field days, the local members who visited also had the opportunity to talk to local workers hired as part of the excavation teams. As the work progressed, these local workers built their capacity to explain to their fellow community members how excavations took place and even discuss the similarities and differences between the recorded El Flaco and El Carril sites. In informal conversations, the local team members expressed pride in doing archaeological excavation work and having learned the processes well enough to explain them to other community members who were curious. They also expressed that the work and knowledge gained from it contributed to earning them more respect among their social peers.

Both visits from different cultural and academic institutions around the country and visits from national researchers were organized to share the progress of the project on-site. The first institutional visit was organized in 2013 by Centro León, the region's largest cultural exhibition center. The site visit was part of the first traveling exhibition organized to publicize the aims of Nexus 1492 and the previous work done in the eastern region of the country. Throughout the project, additional institutional visits were paid to representatives from the Ministry of Culture, universities, and organized local community groups in different parts of the country.

Neighborhood visits were part of the regular activities organized to maintain consistent communication with the smaller communities in the project's geographic area. Research team members took turns making weekly visits during the resting day for the excavation. The frequency of regular gatherings held at the homes of community members

who opened their doors to the project researchers increased each year as the researchers became a familiar presence in the community on their semiannual visits. The gatherings came with mini reports to the hosts on the progress of the excavation, while food and anecdotes about their ancestors became a new means for sharing local histories with the researchers.

Casa Cultural - Cultural House

At the time the project ended in 2019, the local community of el Cruce de Guayacanes was interested in having a permanent cultural space to use as an information center on the deep history of the area as well as to allow local artisans to show and sell their products. There have been numerous conversations about where this can be done and what kind of structure would be a most suitable area to build a traditional *bohío* (an Indigenous round housing structure that is still found mostly in rural areas of the Dominican Republic) as a community center where the local inhabitants and visitors could stop by to learn about the region's history. They have also conceived the space as an opportunity to sell local crafts and locally grown vegetables and herbs.

The local community sees the center (which will likely be called the Casa Cultural de Loma de Guyancanes) as a benefit not only for those who stop in to learn about the local history of their community but also for the many Dominicans passing daily from Cibao Valley to the coast. The *Casa Cultural* will be located on what is today known as the Ruta de Colón, the supposed route that Columbus took to traverse the northwest mountain range on his way to the valley of gold in 1494. Recently, a plot of land apparently owned by the municipality has been identified, and the center's design is currently underway. Community leaders have consulted with their local authorities about permits, finances, and conditions for building, and discussions among residents have gone so far as exploring what kind of management and maintenance strategies could be implemented at the institution.

Día de la Comunidad - Annual Community Day

The center's plans were discussed with the larger public during the last summer fieldwork of the project, in July of 2019, as part of the annual activities held in coordination with local community members and Nexus 1492 project team members.

During this final edition of the annual event, which came to be known as the *Día de la comunidad* (Community Day), members of the Junta de Vecinos El Vigilante, the community's largest neighborhood association, took charge of the coordination for the entire

local community. Community representatives organized a formal event with speakers and cultural presentations that reflected the fusion of the area's cultural and historical expressions (Figure 25).

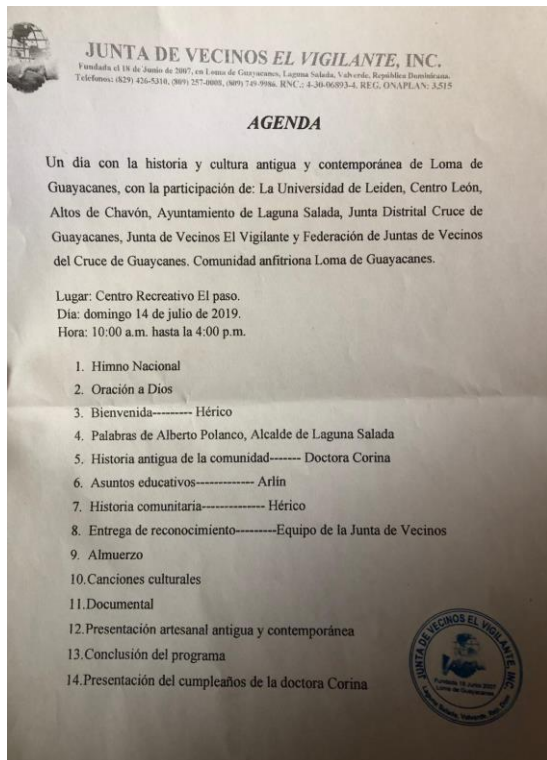


Figure 25 Official agenda of the event prepared by members of the local neighborhood association Junta de Vecinos El Vigilante. Photo by author, 2019. (Personal translation of the content of community agenda for the Community Day written by the board members of the Neighborhood Association El Vigilante).

AGENDA

A day with the history and the ancient and contemporary culture of Loma de Guayacanes, with the participation of: Leiden University, Centro Leon, Altos de Chavon, Laguna Salada City Hall, Cruce de Guayacanes District Board, Neighborhood Association El Vigilante, and the Cruce de Guayacanes Federation of Neighborhood Associations. Loma de Guayacanes as community host.

Place: Recreational Center El Paso.

Date: Sunday 14th of July of 2019

Time: 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

1. National Anthem
2. Prayer to God
3. Welcome by Hérico
4. Words by Alberto Polanco, Mayor of Laguna Salada
5. Ancient history of the community by Dr. Corinne
6. Educational issues by Arlene
7. Community history by Hérico
8. Recognition diplomas by Neighborhood Association members

9. Lunch
 10. Cultural songs
 11. Documentary
 12. Presentation of ancient and contemporary crafts
 13. Program conclusion
 14. Presentation of birthday celebration for Dr. Corinne
-

In an all-day event, local historians and political figures related local stories connecting Indigenous heritage with narratives of courage, defense of the land, and hopes for progress.

Participant observation allowed for the appreciation of the contextually rich settings in which the researcher could see residents incorporating their knowledge of Indigenous heritage objects from local excavation sites into their community life (Figure 26).



Figure 26. Mayor of the Laguna Salada municipality narrating the local history of the area. Photo by author, 2019.

Throughout the five years of research, it was observed how different local community members incorporated information about the Indigenous past into their modern and religious traditions. The researcher was also able to observe how the co-production of educational initiatives took shape. For example, the annual Community Day presentations included a mix of blessings of the event; poetry highlighting a local Indigenous female chief, Anacaona (Figure 27); the singing of *salves*, Dominican Christian chants (which are also used to summon rain during the dry season); and mini lectures on contemporary history (Figure 28).



Figure 27. Local poet reciting a famous Dominican poem about Indigenous chief Anacaona as part of the cultural presentations for the Community Day. Photo by author, 2019.



Figure 28. Singers of the traditional chants Salves as part of the cultural presentations for the Community Day. (Photo by author, 2019).

The day closed with the presentation of the Nexus 1492 documentary *El returnbar del Caribe Indígena* produced by Pablo Lozano from the Instituto Tecnológico-INTEC (Figure 29). The researcher observed how the presentation of the documentary was a special moment for many of the attendees, as they had an opportunity to see themselves on a big screen. Community members who recognized themselves spoke amongst themselves and the

family members and friends who also attended the day-long celebration about how good it felt to be featured in the film and felt valued because their opinion and stories were featured for many to see. The local people that were interviewed were eager to hear how different audiences reacted when team members shared their details of other presentations of the documentary in different provinces and in Santo Domingo where it was presented at one of the locations of the largest movie theater company in the country.



Figure 29. Community members enjoying the official presentation in El Cruce de Guayacanes of the *El retumbar del Caribe Indígena* documentary. Photo by author, 2019.

Finally, an exhibition of a selection of objects excavated at the El Flaco and El Carril sites, alongside the display of crafts made by local community members, traditional medicinal drinks, and locally grown vegetables, concluded this rich opportunity for communities to connect with Indigenous heritage on their own terms (Figure 30). Although the Nexus 1492 project's team members were available to answer questions about the objects in the exhibition tables and vitrines, conversations around the tables encompassed community members telling stories of when they were children and used to find objects similar to the ones excavated. For some, touching the objects triggered memories of specific finds and how the elders in their families used to tell them tales of spiritual connections to the land that were sometimes associated with the objects they had found.



Figure 30. Community members sharing childhood memories related to the types of objects found in the El Flaco and El Carril excavation sites that were exhibited as part of the cultural presentations for the Community Day. Photo by author, 2019.

Local community members worked with local and international researchers to learn about the past through the land and the objects excavated from it in both formal and informal settings. Community meetings, which have been the main platforms for residents to discuss local issues or make decisions, became the most effective means to coordinate activities that the community expressed wanting to have. The observations became a means of gathering practical information on how the community had inclusive discussions and reached a consensus on how to integrate the knowledge acquired from their interaction with the cultural material found at the research sites. The community meetings proved to be the best scenario for local members to decide what they wanted to do with the knowledge gained from their participation in the project and how they wanted to display it. The communities at El Cruce de Guayacanes and Laguna Salada designed their own connections with their local Indigenous heritage. They connected to the collection of Indigenous heritage objects obtained as a result of rigorous scientific research and chose to access them through songs, dances, prayers, oral narratives, and locally based architecture.

Summary

Chapter 6 contained the results of the analysis of documents and participant observation, as well as the results of interviews and surveys administered in different provinces in the Dominican Republic. The results correspond to the research questions and demonstrate consistency with the methodology proposed. A total of 515 surveys were administered through a purposively selected group of participants from the education, museum, tourism, and arts communities. The survey respondents also included local community members encountered near museums and archaeological sites to identify their attitudes toward access to Indigenous heritage collections and what they think could improve this access. Further, 22 individuals were interviewed to understand their opinions on how Indigenous heritage collections are managed to ascertain how to protect them better and how to improve access to the collections. There were 15 activities within the geographic scope of Nexus 1492's northwest excavation areas observed to determine how community members were creating connections with the Indigenous heritage objects found at the sites. The activities in which the most interaction between community members and the excavated materials were observed were pinpointed as examples of how communities can connect with their locality's Indigenous heritage. The next chapters discuss the main findings of the study.

The discussion of these findings is presented in the next chapter, followed by the chapter with the conclusion of the study and recommendations.

CHAPTER 7. Discussion: connecting Indigenous heritage collections with communities

7.1 Introduction

Departing from Stuart Hall's (1989, 225-226) reflection on the unfixed nature of cultural identity and his recognition of the impact of unique, ruptured, and continued transformation of power relations within the Caribbean, the present research is framed within the overarching discussion of the cultural traumas caused by the colonial experience. Museums, as sites for addressing social justice issues (Cross 2017; Kinsley 2016; Coffey et al. 2015), hold potential for transforming the way knowledge is produced (Ünsal 2019). This knowledge production contributes to the construction of local identity, and if mediated through the communities museums serve, it can help reconcile historical narratives despite the cultural discontinuities experienced in the Caribbean.

The possibility of transformation is particularly relevant for confronting the colonized past of the Dominican Republic when considering how to improve the way people learn about their cultural heritage. However, any attempt to transform how cultural heritage is constructed in modern times cannot happen without recognizing how the notion of modernity was framed within the globalizing power relations brought about by the conquest and colonization of the Americas (Quijano 2000, 533). Furthermore, any transformative approach needs to also recognize the racial superiority conception centered at the domination model imposed that spanned for 500 years. (Quijano 2000, 533-534), The Indigenous people of the Caribbean were quickly considered as the dominated inferior race, that, along with the Africans forcefully brought to the continent, became the enslaved motor of the colonial economy, losing their historical and social identity and forcibly adopting the dominant Eurocentric culture (Quijano 2000, 536-541).

Heritage connections between communities and museum collections represent reconciling bridges between families' stories of elders and what is traditionally learnt at school. Reflecting on personal experience, the researcher considered that it was not until she started working at the Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology (which was also the first museum she visited as a child) that she realized daily activities in life at home or in her grandmother's backyard where she grew up were in fact cultural practices that can be connected to cultural roots that stem from the mixture of Indigenous, African, and European heritage. Learning how to set up a small three-stone *fogón* fire pit to cook early morning staples from the family's small *conuco* and brew coffee to filter it through cotton fabric—to

sometimes drink it in small *higüeros*—were some of the favorite chores she learned as a child. With a big family whose most members lived nearby the grandmother's house, she also remembers learning about the family elders from the *campo* through these gatherings since the family cooked dinner for more than a dozen people every night. Washing clothes in the *batea* out in the backyard, river fishing, and re-telling *ciguapa* and *bacá* stories to frighten the children so they would not go out at night by themselves were fun and trivial things that today make her feel connected to the land where she grew up, through the objects today found in museums and those still scattered throughout the country.

As the researcher reflects of her participation in community activities that felt familiar, she particularly remembered being nine years old and seeing scattered ceramic sherds on the sand of the public beach, *Caleta*, wondering why people did not pick up their broken things. She can still recall the grandmother's voice explaining that those were from the *indios* that lived there before they went to live in caves and to the mountains. She remembers being left puzzled since she did not know of any nearby caves or mountains anywhere near the coastal town. She had never made the heritage connection until she started visiting museums as an adult and realized how island's history is a complex web of multiple cultural fabrics that have not been told in an inclusive manner.

Today, as museums face more scrutiny and are being demanded to decolonize as institutions (Shelton 2013, Lonetree 2012; Smith 1999), there is an opportunity for Dominican museums to adopt a critical perspective and turn their collections, exhibition spaces, and programming into connections to the cultural past, present, and future. Hence, the present qualitative study explored how communities can connect with Indigenous heritage collections to critically analyze museum narratives that perpetuate colonial ideas of Caribbean Indigenous extinction that contribute to a disconnection from public and private museums' material culture. The study's objectives were to 1) identify the scope of Indigenous heritage collections in the country and better understand how they were formed, and 2) obtain insight into how members of the educational, heritage, governmental, and local communities are accessing collections to determine how a critical museology approach can help create multivocal engagements and inclusive meeting points for cultural self-determination. Nevertheless, critical museology alone is not enough to address the disconnection that Dominican communities have from their public and private Indigenous heritage collections. Since questions regarding the examination of identity in the Caribbean have been part of the formation of the many nation-states in the region (Hall 1989), the researcher has also

incorporated into the museological framework of the research the concerns of Caribbean scholars that exhort to pushing boundaries for museums to be sites of identity contestation (Cummins 1994; 2004; Ulloa-Hung 2009).

To answer the research questions, surveys, interviews, and participant observation were used to explore the attitudes and types of access to collections different communities have. In this chapter, the findings are compared with the relevant literature while addressing the implications that might empower communities to connect with Indigenous heritage collections through multivocal and inclusive engagements as a first step to critically examine museum narratives in the Dominican Republic. The discussion addresses critical museology as a framework to propose connections that integrate the multicultural and multiethnic community experiences that make up the Caribbean to improve how today society understands and values the legacies of the island's Indigenous heritage, and how these legacies impact identity formation.

7.2 Critical museology as a lens for Indigenous heritage collections and community connections

The Nexus 1492 project provided an opportunity to examine the relationships between communities and museum collections in the Dominican Republic. The researched specifically looked at:

- the scope of public and private Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic and the legislation that impacts its management;
- how the different communities that were part of the research have had and would like to have access to Indigenous heritage collections, their views on these collections and the values they assign to them; and
- how to encourage communities to engage and appreciate the cultural knowledge that Indigenous heritage collections transmit, especially for understanding contemporary Dominican society, and the need for future generations to care for these collections.

The information gathered in this qualitative study related to public and private museums with Indigenous heritage collections and the communities around them. During the research, the population consulted was formed by members of the educational, heritage, governmental, and local communities in provinces that have an Indigenous heritage collection or archaeological site, public officials with current or former posts in heritage

management, nonprofit heritage managers, and private collectors of Indigenous heritage objects. Although there is no uniformly accepted definition of community, considering the flexibility in seeing communities as groups with a common interest (Agbe-Davies 2010), the participant's answers brought light to a panoramic view of how people might connect to when asked to reflect on their interactions with archaeological heritage. Their responses contributed to a better understanding of how people access collections and how communities can engage with these collections to build a sense of ownership and identity, and to raise awareness for the need to increase preservation and protection efforts nationwide.

The community-centered application of a critical museological framework was useful within this aggregate approach for determining viable and actionable possibilities for connection based on the results of the study. This approach helped frame the findings of the research to determine how information can be used to ascertain the scope of Indigenous heritage collections, how people access them, the attitudes they have toward their ability to access the collections, how legislation impacts this access, and how technology plays a role in accessing collections to connect them with communities.

Based on the application of Anthony Shelton's (2013) epistemological positions for a critical museology framework, Alissandra Cummins' (2004) Caribbean museum engagement propositions, and Jorge Ulloa's (2009) call to study the Dominican Republic's archaeological heritage in light of new scientific progress, Indigenous heritage collections and communities in the Dominican Republic have opportunities to connect in the following ways:

a) Identification and scrutiny of narratives and assemblage of collections (Shelton 2013, 9-10)

The disconnect of communities from Indigenous heritage collections starts with the narratives of colonial extinction, which, for centuries, placed the native peoples of the Caribbean outside the historical scope of the nation's making. Centuries of enslavement that fed economic and religious models bled the colonies dry of their Indigenous identity (Laguer Díaz 2013; Hall 1999). The legacies of the Indigenous peoples of the Caribbean continue to be represented as part of a distant past (Cummins 2004). Museums with Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic have lagged in updating their exhibitions to reflect the importance of Indigenous heritage knowledge to modern-day Dominicans (Ulloa-Hung 2009). Openly recognizing these culturally defining omissions is a much-needed first step in laying the foundation for community connections. Identifying how these knowledge gaps

have been replicated and have contributed to erasing the Indigenous narratives behind the European-based assemblages of items is essential in conceiving new assemblages of Indigenous heritage artifacts.

b) Recognition of how private subjective collecting practices have perpetuated the ‘truth effect’ in museum displays (Shelton 2013, 10-11).

Private collectors have long contributed to the formation of significant institutions that have allowed access to seeing important Indigenous heritage collections to a wide audience. Nevertheless, the permeation of souvenir accumulation and systematic collecting practices (Stewart 1984, Pearce 1994c) that have been naturalized by museums (Shelton 2001; 2013, 10) is still latent in most museums with Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic. The chronologically linear displays of the scientific classification of Indigenous heritage collections overpowered any knowledge that would mean to integrate cultural identity as part of the historical narrative beyond the veneration as part of museum objects (Ulloa-Hung 2009, 6-7).

The collector’s subjective nature of collecting (Shelton 2013; Owen 2006; Pearce 1994c), although meant to contribute to the typological classification of Caribbean archaeology, shaped Dominican museums that were formed by objects taken out of context through amateur excavations or looting of archaeological sites. To establish connections between communities and these founding collector’s legacies, museums need to disrupt the mediated relationships between collectors and objects that have largely gone uncontested (Lonetree 2012). The problematic nature of these relationships has to be addressed by engaging communities in dialogues to reflect how collectors have contributed to rigid heritage interpretations that claim the Indigenous heritage recognized in contemporary Dominican society has only been linked through social memory.

c) Community knowledge versus institutional or legislative mediation (Shelton 2013, 11-12)

Examining the knowledge communities gain by accessing Indigenous heritage collections may be a significant first step in challenging the current channels of knowledge mediation, such as exhibition scripts and guided tours in museums. The in-depth examination of how museums with traditional exhibitions portray the Indigenous past through collections can then be linked with formal education and academic institutions with a broader mediation

structure connecting with the educational community (Ariese 2018). A community's social and economic realities and educational desires must be considered so that the communities can define the terms of their own connections. Understanding the complexities of a community's context can be key to developing effective means to mediate connections. This understanding is important even when communities have little knowledge of the Indigenous contribution to their local history, or if they do not know what the legal implications of having an archaeological collection may be.

d) Deconstruction of traditional displays (Shelton 2013, 11-12)

Even if they are maintained as the central means of connecting collections and communities, school activities cannot continue to take place only within traditional museum walls or modes of display. Mediated exhibitions for different types of communities where different types of strategies are used for interpretation need to be conscious of the different needs that the respective communities have in their desire to connect with Indigenous heritage collections. Furthermore, moving away from the traditional portrayals of contact and colonial period relations that hierarchize European perspectives will aid in breaking away from tendencies to accentuate extraordinary objects (Lyon and Harris 1995). For connections to be integrated into a community's cultural life, the ways in which heritage objects can be exhibited need to consider how communities transfer knowledge in informal settings. Community members need to have the capacity to create connections within their cultural, social, and economic context on their own terms: for example, identifying which heritage experiences communities would like to implement in their local context, whether through online experiences where they could contribute using digital platforms, or creating their own heritage displays in nontraditional spaces in the local community.

A critical museology framework serves as a foundation for disrupting the traditional ways of conceiving museum displays and programming, and in the Dominican museological context, there are implementable and potentially far-reaching aspects of this framework. The scrutiny of current narratives through enriched educational approaches in the already existing relations between museums and communities can be even more productive to address the educational community's concerns. A significant pathway to follow is one of collaborative work to strengthen how students and teachers become aware of the diverse local options for this access. These options depend on the available resources and may be accessed through local initiatives to display archaeological material found in the area as teachers adapt school

curricula to better incorporate how they use Indigenous heritage collections to teach about Indigenous culture.

This framework helps the Dominican Republic embrace the paradigm shift (Weil 1999) that places people at the center of interaction with Indigenous heritage objects and does this with a critical mindset. The deconstruction of formal and traditional heritage structures into more flexible and diverse ones calls for increased accessibility to and engagement with Indigenous heritage collections to design inclusive connections between collections and communities. The state and private collectors have to take a backseat as the concept of custodianship is better understood by communities, collectors, and heritage officials, and managers. A better understanding may facilitate access at different levels, and foster connections with the communities that collecting institutions say they wish to serve. The exhibition-centered format, with top-down approaches to presenting cultural information through collections, can shift faster toward a more engaging interaction with historical narratives in the Dominican Republic if all stakeholders agree on identifying connections to create safe spaces for the discussion of preservation and education.

In analyzing the program offerings for visitors, it was observed that Dominican museums do not follow current museum trends that have moved away from displaying accumulated objects (Hooper-Greenhill 2007; Pearce 1990). When considering connections between museums and communities, the only consistent offering museums have in common is the general tour of collections. The museum staff is too poorly skilled to design educational programs or conduct academic research that could help fulfill their community's educational needs.

Dominican museums with Indigenous heritage collections have failed to renew their exhibitions and heritage policy, and many of them still have exhibition scripts based on strictly classificatory research. This has further contributed to the disconnect with communities by limiting access to cultural information that objects can help convey. The respondents in this study seemed to be concerned more about the missed educational opportunities than valuing the tradition of collecting heritage objects, which was the basis for the formation of many of the public and private museums that hold Indigenous objects today. There does not seem to be an interest in major and ever-changing exhibitions. Still, most respondents expressed a recurrent concern about the need to change decades-old museographies to make it attractive for people to visit museums. This resonates with what the

literature also finds. For Tony Bennett (1998), the criticism of inadequate display practices, inherited from the nineteenth-century knowledge-ordering tendencies, emphasizes content and how content must reflect the knowledge of the constituencies that have historically been neglected.

7.3 Critical community connections through improved access

When discussing with collectors what were potential measures to allow better access to their collections, an attitude of reservation or despair in their answers was detected, as all collectors had hoped at one point or another to secure better financial support from the government or the private sector. The collectors that expressed having plans to either open or expand their visiting capabilities seemed more confident of counting on foreign tourist visits than domestic visitors, despite school audiences being the primary public audience of museums in the Dominican Republic. Even those collectors that described the government and officials as untrustworthy due to the state's incapacity to care for its public collections still hope for legislation that can facilitate the creation of museums through tax incentives for the private sector, bringing more collections to tourism-oriented areas in the country as well as to collections and resources that support research and the creation of educational programs.

Collectors and heritage managers hope for more economic support to display or care for collections and for legislation that better protects them and facilitates local and international collaborations. In contrast, public officials hope for legislation that can better monitor private collectors and provide the conditions to improve monitoring capacity. Across the spectrum of concerns, all respondents agree that the lack of political will is an issue that continues to manifest and that no one is addressing publicly or strategically. For better access, most people believe improvements have to take place through the formal educational and cultural structures in government—such as the ministries. As the access to collections can be related to the identification of power relations—social, economic, and cultural (Stylianou-Lamber 2010), the presentation of museum narratives that motivate communities to identify such relations can be a tool to gear critical reflection. Improving the way information about Indigenous heritage is presented to the public through collections is a significant concern in increasing access and was the main point interviewees mentioned when asked what they thought could motivate people to learn more about Indigenous heritage collections. Current and former public sector officials emphasized the need for better educational activities and materials to be incorporated on visits to Indigenous heritage collections.

If museums with Indigenous heritage collections wish to better connect with visitors, developing programs for adults and children to access museum collections (Hooper-Greenhill 2007) must be at the center of creating connections. Workshops on heritage conservation and archaeological knowledge were ranked as the most interesting by respondents. About half of all respondents saw high value in activities related to arts and crafts, cultural events with explanations, dance and theater, and material accessible through the internet. Further, half of the respondents felt that visiting Indigenous heritage collections helped them better understand who they are by having obtained knowledge on the topic.

The majority of participants also indicated a desire to want greater access to Indigenous heritage collections because they perceived it would give them access to more knowledge. When asked what would make respondents feel more connected with Indigenous heritage collections, learning about the origins of the collections, understanding them better, and having access to more research were the most frequent answers. In considering how this could be leveraged to build connections, respondents indicated that catalogs and magazines were the preferred forms for learning resources, and the most convenient digital resources were books and magazines. Having access to object labels and images was not indicated as frequently. Responses point to a significant need to create connections with Indigenous heritage collections that allow communities to feel they own their local narratives. This can increase the sense of ownership of objects that, by law, are considered part of the nation's cultural assets, but that in reality are continuously exposed to looting, destruction, and illegal trafficking. Without a sense of community ownership and a lack of multivocal engagement, Indigenous heritage collections will continue to be seen as vestiges of a remote past, and interest in preservation and protection will continue to be low.

7.3.1 Access through geographical decentralization

Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic are essential resources that provide valuable information on the history of the original settlers of the island of Hispaniola and the rest of the Caribbean. The collections help illustrate the complex social, cultural, and economic interactions among the groups that first populated the region in a more vibrant way than the outdated literature used to teach Indigenous history in schools. Learning about the scope of the Indigenous heritage collections serves as a platform to better understand how they formed, where they are located, how they are managed, and how different communities are using them.

The research conducted to identify the scope of public and private Indigenous heritage collections revealed that those accessible to the public vary in both breadth and depth. The collections have primarily been assembled with outdated collecting practices and suffer from under-documentation and lack a geographical context. Almost all of the museums are geographically located in large urban areas, limiting informational and physical access to the cultural knowledge these objects transmit to city-dwellers. These findings can help in addressing broader issues of rural and urban identity formation, facilitating access to the knowledge heritage collections produce, imposing regulation through legislation, and improving education to foster connections between communities and collections that can realistically contribute to significant multivocal engagements and multicultural inclusion. The use of interpretation strategies to mediate these engagements have to be designed with the intent to break stereotypes (Crooke 2010).

The Dominican Republic has had five public and seven private Indigenous heritage collections since the initial attempt to establish a national museum in 1927. The primary public and private institutions are located either in the country's capital or its largest urban areas, despite the fact that the provenance of archaeological collections is not urban, but instead from coastal and mountain excavations or the rural areas of provinces. The centralization of collection displays in the capital or major industrial cities—such as Santiago and La Romana—was a concern to the interviewees. Their discontent reflects a concern about having these cultural resources available only in major cities, which can limit access only to those who can afford the travel expenses. The survey respondents indicated not visiting museums partly due to transportation costs. The geographical centralization of the collections poses constraints of time and distance for visitors, especially the educational community, as it may take at least an entire day for schools to visit the well-known collections.

As the survey responses have shown, more than half of the people consulted expressed having visited a museum with an Indigenous heritage collection, the majority of those being from Santo Domingo. The higher visitation rate in Santo Domingo may be attributed to it having the most significant Indigenous heritage collections in the country (the Museo del Hombre Dominicano and the Sala de Arte Prehispánico); further, transportation is more readily available in Santo Domingo.

The locations of these collections are significant, since time, distance, and transportation were listed as main deterrents by those who had indicated they had not visited

a museum. The concentration of the collections in larger or more densely populated industrial cities, besides the capital city—which also has three minor collections within other institutions—can be attributed to the private effort to enhance cultural attractions to draw tourists. For example, La Romana Province is a hub of tourism with the Casa de Campo Resort and Villas, which manages Altos de Chavón’s cultural village which was free to visit to anyone wanting to enjoy a dynamic cultural and artistic civic space? for the 35 years before it became a gated residential area. The Regional Museum of Archaeology was built in Altos de Chavón to enrich the artistic and cultural offerings for high-end tourists. Similarly in Santiago, the Centro Cultural Eduardo León Jimenes also acquired the custody rights of a private collection to make the city a center for excellence in arts and culture in the Caribbean region and attract national and international visitors.

7.3.2 Access through the documentation of objects

The documentation of heritage collections is a fundamental part of the development of conservation and management systems. The documentation of objects (which may consist of inventories, catalogues, and information on provenance, acquisition, or archaeological context) contributes to understanding the history and nature of the objects and can be used to determine conservation needs and research aims. The documentation of objects also helps to identify illicit trafficking threats and create educational materials.

In this study, the majority of the public officials, heritage managers, and collectors consulted agreed that collections do not have enough documentation. A review of collection-related documents also indicates that the number of under-documented objects in exhibitions and large storage areas in both public and private collections is an area of difficulty for Indigenous heritage management. The problematic state of collections’ historical and archaeological documentation could be related to the documentation standards of former times; most of the collections that are accessible to the public today, as well as those that have closed, seem to have been formed in times when massive accumulation was the norm, and the documentation was of a classificatory nature.

An accumulation tendency is discerned in the description of the legislative mandate for the creation of the Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Antropológicas (INDIA). This institute, the first of its kind, was founded with the private collection of its first director, Emile de Boyrie Moya (Pina 1978). Part of his collection was moved back and forth between the institute and the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, leaving no documentation behind.

Even for the public institutions that remain open (Museo del Hombre Dominicano, the museum at the Parque Arqueológico Nacional La Isabela, and the Faro a Colon), the documentation systems of the collections that are under the care of these institutions have not been improved. In the private sector, of the five Indigenous heritage collections open to the public, two of the ones that are overseen by larger institutions (Museo Antropológico de la Universidad Central del Este and Museo Dr. Estrada) have been closed to the public for more than two decades. No official documentation information was found for either collection.

La Caleta, one of the first public heritage sites to be excavated using scientific methods, has been closed to the public since at least 1999. The researcher was not able to find detailed information on inventories of the excavation finds at the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, where part of the collection is supposed to be on display. The researcher did not locate information on which objects from the La Caleta excavations were integrated into the Museo del Hombre Dominicano's main exhibits. When a site visit was done in the year 2000, local community members reported that it had been closed with an iron gate because it had been deteriorating and being looted since Hurricane George in 1998. This was confirmed again in 2019 when the researcher went back to see if the building had been restored.

Records of the objects found during the archaeological excavations at La Caleta in Santo Domingo were challenging to locate. The only place where an inventory from La Caleta's first excavations was located was at the Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods. The original inventory document was relatively well preserved despite the lack of environmental control systems. The more significant references to these archaeological finds are in articles in the Museo del Hombre Dominicano's annual bulletin, the museum's longest-running official publication. There is even less of a paper trail for the collections that are understood to still be under the custody of the Universidad Central del Este in the province of San Pedro de Macorís in the east, and the municipal library in Azua in the southwest, which formerly housed part of Dr. Estrada Torre's collection. The poor state of documentation for the three collections that have closed is similar to that of the basic initial inventories of private collections in records kept at the Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods, as explained in Chapter 5; this is the centralized public institution that is supposed to keep information about all public and private collections in the country.

The review of documents for this study revealed a lack of documentation for most collections, hence a significant void in information regarding the context in which the objects

were excavated. The poor documentation systems most likely reflect the collecting practices of the time. As the value of the collections was increasingly tied to economic and aesthetic factors, their cultural and historical value decreased. Several collectors spoke of the rush they felt to purchase complete objects under the claim to avoid its illicit traffic outside of the country, while disregarding ceramic sherds that usually accompanied the sales pitch as part of a group of pieces found together.

Nevertheless, while lacking in object documentation, the lives of the collectors and their contribution to the nation's cultural enrichment seem to have been better documented. While collectors' biographies do not speak of international conquering adventures, there are similarities to the literature reviewed to learn about the documentation of Caribbean objects. The documentation and valuation of the collections is proportional to the reputation of the collector (Joyce 2013; Chippindale and Gill 2000; Vilches 2004; Sackler 1998). In the case of Dominican Indigenous heritage collections open to the public, all address the life-long interest of the collectors in caring for the objects collected, either through printed text panels or orally during guided visits.

Literature about museum collections with Indigenous heritage from the Americas criticizes the emphasis placed on highlighting more travel tales of those that gathered objects instead of the cultural narratives embedded in the objects that were taken back to Europe as evidence of the exotic places conquered (Vilches 2004; Keating and Markey 2011; MacDonald 2002; Daros and Colten 2009; Owen 2006; Serna 2011). A pattern was recognized on the literature similar to Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic. Whether it is on institutional brochures or articles about the objects, each publication at some point highlights the life and achievements of the original collector, how the objects were gathered, and how they became available to the public. It was observed from publications and proceedings from museum conferences in the Dominican Republic, that it has been deemed important to know who the pioneer collectors were. There are several presentations in conferences, seminars or commemorating events that highlight how private collectors have contributed to the establishment of archaeological collections for public enjoyment, and how they have also contributed to attracting international collaborators in archaeological research, which eventually aided in the professionalization of archaeological research in the country (Tavares Maria and García Arévalo 2005). However, the focus on the collectors and their search adventures also eclipses the shortcomings of the documentation of Indigenous heritage collections and the potential revision of Indigenous narratives. As

discussed in Chapter 2, studies point out how tales of explorers have eclipsed the documentation of cultural material.

Since the 1970s, heritage legislation has been established for public and private institutions, as well as for private citizens with Indigenous heritage collections, to ensure a minimum of documentation with at least minimal information on collection inventories. After reviewing the documents available at the Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods within the Department of Monumental Heritage at the Ministry of Culture, it is identifiable that there has been minimal registration compliance on the part of significant public and private institutions that have Indigenous heritage collections. The original inventories of two of the leading private collections, with handwritten notes (Figure 31), were the closest versions of official records related to the inventory of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano.

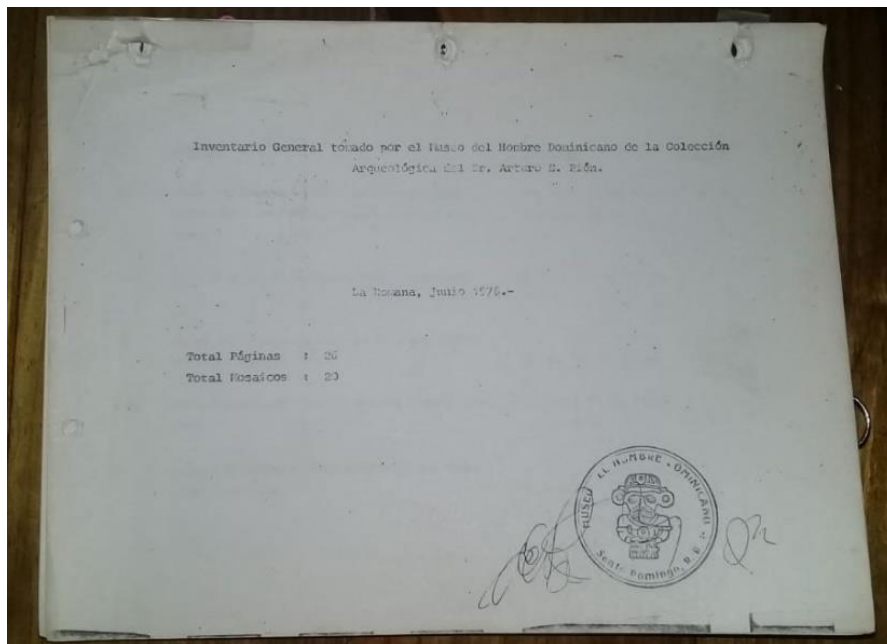


Figure 31 Page of the first inventory for the Samuel Pion collection done by the Museo del Hombre Dominicano. Photo by author, 2015.

The center’s staff mentioned that there was a robust inventory for the Centro León’s Indigenous heritage collection—although they could not locate the physical copy. The rest of the inventories reviewed were general lists of objects with very short descriptions. An undated list of objects belonging to the collection of Bernardo Vega, the original custodian of the current collection on display at the Centro León Jimenes. The document text suggests that the Centro León Jimenes created its own inventory system as it received the collection transferred from Bernardo Vega’s custody. This type of up-to-date documentation, registered

at the Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods, constitutes a first of its kind, setting a precedent for heritage institutions that care for collections but are not directly involved in archaeological research.

In the private sector, only the Centro León and the Sala de Arte Pre-hispánico indicated having an updated inventory of its complete collection, also in digital form, and both institutions have conservation personnel. The Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology has a partial inventory, as it had not yet finished adding images to its files with object descriptions for objects that were added to the collection after 1981. Funds had never been assigned for the digitization of the entire collection, both in the exhibition and in storage. The only complete inventory with numbers, descriptions, photographs, and measurements is the inventory done by the Museo del Hombre Dominicano in 1978 that was passed on when the Bluhdorn Charitable Trust acquired the rights of the Samuel Pión collection. The 1978 inventory has been digitized and enriched with more descriptive object information.

In the public sector, over several visits to its library to review collection archives, personnel from the Museo del Hombre Dominicano expressed that inventory documents were outdated. There were no available digital files of two known inventories that have been compiled. Only physical files of archaeological objects of Indigenous and colonial production were kept, namely in binders that dated from 1981 and 1989. In subsequent visits to the Museo del Hombre Dominicano library, neither copy was possible to locate. Further inquiry of staff revealed that the copies were kept at the director's office. At the end of 2017, the Museo del Hombre Dominicano began a remodeling project headed by architects from the Office of the Presidency, and museum staff expressed that the objects were being placed in temporary storage hastily. The staff members that were interviewed indicated that there was a plan to update the inventory as remodeling works took place throughout the museum, but no clear plan was shared. One staff member also expressed discontent with what he perceived was a lack of intention to involve the staff in the Office of the Presidency's remodeling project (personal communication with senior staff and museum researcher).

The Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods seems to have the most documents for inventories of Indigenous heritage collections that date to the late 1970s and early 1980s. It can be considered that this is the only period when collections were cataloged regularly and consistently. The Center had what seemed to be a significant inventory of the excavated

materials found at La Caleta in 1972. The center also had a copy of the 1981 inventory of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, similar to the one found in the Museo del Hombre Dominicano's library. Since both inventories of Samuel Pión's collection dated from 1979 (compiled by the Museo del Hombre Dominicano), and the 1981 inventory of Manuel García Arévalo's collection was also found at the center.

The deterioration of the pages that comprised the physical documents of both La Caleta's excavation record as well as the Museo del Hombre Dominicano's inventory (Manuel García Arévalo and Samuel Pión's original inventories compiled by the Museo del Hombre Dominicano), reflect the poor conservation conditions that exist at the Center for the Inventory of Cultural Goods, which was last visited by the researcher in 2016. Their office is housed in a colonial building whose construction dates back to the sixteenth century. It lacks climate control units and dehumidifiers in the document storage areas, and even an air-conditioning system for the staff's comfort, which would also generally help in the conservation of documents. The cabinet files were placed near mildew-ridden walls. When the staff was questioned about the conditions, they indicated that they had submitted reports to improve both work and conservation conditions at the center. Still, they had received no formal response from the Ministry of Culture.

The reasons that Roberto Cassá (n.d.) lists for the poor survival of historical records when referring to the colonial history of the country can be related to the current documentation issues that institutions with Indigenous heritage collections open to the public face. Based on the document review to ascertain the inventory of public and private collections, damage from climatic conditions and official administrative carelessness still seem to be significant factors affecting the capacity of institutions to conserve collection documentation. The lack of care and continued negligence to undermine any legislative regulation that might have attempted to create systematic documentation. The loss of the documentation for the Universidad Central del Este's museum due to flooding from Hurricane Georges attests to this. The lack of staff to follow up on the reporting status of collections affects not only the private sector but also the public sector. The unlocated inventory for the archaeological collection at the INDIA, housed by the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, only speaks of the institutional incapacity to keep track of the cultural material in its care, much less collections in the care of private citizens. The lack of trained personnel and funds to have the inventory updated by archaeological professionals has perpetuated the Altos de Chavón Regional Museum's practices of under-documentation.

Although there is no updated documentation for the collections displayed at the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, the 1980s inventories remain a significant source of information. It seems as if researchers have created better documentation systems for inventorying objects found in archaeological excavations done after the year 2000 that usually placed in storage. During conferences or seminars, it was observed that reports of excavated objects have increased. More recent reports found in the museum's library include documentation of objects in storage. These reports have been submitted by the individual institutions or researchers that lead research projects.

Under-documentation places collections at risk. Having poor or no records makes it more challenging to track lost objects due to misplacement, theft, or illicit trafficking. As most public and private institutions with Indigenous heritage collections open to the public have insufficient collection documentation and technology, collection information is not freely available digitally. Collection management systems are in place for some institutions, but databases are not freely available either. This affects the potential for community connections and possibilities for scientific study that can contribute to enriching how communities engage with Indigenous heritage collections.

The confirmation of the conventional under-documentation of Indigenous heritage collections demonstrates the latent need to create a better bedrock for managing Indigenous heritage resources. Creative, academic, scientific, and community-based approaches are needed to provide better context for more productive and impactful use of Indigenous heritage in public and private collections. Any approach would need to include educational and regulatory components to guarantee that communities outside of Dominican urban areas, especially in rural places, can still have access to and connect with the nation's cultural treasures.

7.3.3 A thorny legislative path to heritage access

The second research question of the study was how current Dominican heritage laws hinder or foster community access to archaeological collections. Through the analysis of documentation and interviews with heritage officials, heritage managers, and collectors, it was found that the current poor capacity for legislative implementation and monitoring hinders community access to public and private Indigenous heritage collections. Negligence in the care and supervision of these collections has contributed to their disconnect from the community while permitting the looting and disappearance of objects without consequences.

The history of the creation of Indigenous heritage collections and museums in the Dominican Republic has been subjected to an interrupted road of laws that remain on paper and have seldom seen full implementation. From the first piece of heritage legislation in 1870 to the first comprehensive set of regulations for museums in 2007, 137 years passed before the country had a heritage policy that could be referenced internationally. The latest modification to the constitution, which has had 39 modifications since 1844 (Vargas 2018), explicitly declares the preservation of archaeological heritage to fall under collective rights in Section IV, in which “the state recognizes general collective rights and interests to consequently protect and preserve cultural, historic, urbanistic, artistic, architectural and archaeological heritage” (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Constitución 2015, Art. 66).

In a more general manner, the current Constitution stipulates that the National Congress has the power to arrange all aspects regarding the conservation of monuments and historical, cultural, and artistic heritage (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Constitución 2015, Art. 93). The Cultural and Sports Rights section of the 2015 Constitution very eloquently declares that every person has a “right to participate and act with liberty and without censorship in the cultural life of the nation and have full access to and enjoyment of cultural goods and services” (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Constitución 2015, Art. 64, para. 1). These stipulations did not change from the ones laid out in the 2010 constitution. The amended constitution of 2010 represented a seminal milestone in recognition of state-guaranteed cultural rights, as it contained a significant elaboration of the policy of cultural rights that had been under extensive development (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Constitución 2010) since the constitution of 1994 (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Constitución 1994, Art. 101).

The unambiguous and positive recognition of citizens’ rights to the nation’s cultural life and products, as in the Constitutions of 2010 and 2015, provide excellent legislative grounds to justify the need for better monitoring practices. The heritage law that in effect formed the Ministry of Culture was passed in the year 2000; this also created the National Museum Network, under the General Directorate of Museums, within the Sub-ministry of Cultural Heritage. The National Museum Network developed the first regulations to enable public museums to follow norms and procedures, which included recommendations for private museums (De Peña 2007). The monitoring of adherence to heritage regulations, however, remains minimal.

As explored in previous chapters, current Dominican heritage law defines cultural heritage as comprising of

all the cultural goods, values, and symbols tangible and intangible that are expressions of the Dominican nation, such as the traditions, the customs, and the habits, as well as the group of goods, including those underwater, material and immaterial, movable and immovable property, that possess a unique historical, artistic, aesthetic, fine arts, architectural, urban, archaeological, environmental, linguistic, sound, audiovisual, film, scientific, technological, testimonial, documentary, literary, bibliographic, museographical, anthropological interest and manifestations, the products and the representations of popular culture (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 41-00 of 2000, Art. 1, numeral 2).

Furthermore, in its third paragraph, Article 47 assigned the present-day Ministry of Culture as the entity in charge of evaluating existing regulation for the protection of heritage, including the

[...] technical and scientific identification of places in which archaeological goods could be found or that could be contiguous to archaeological areas, it will make the respective declarations and will draft a special plan for protection, in collaboration with the rest of the authorities and institutions at the national level (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, Ley 41-00 of 2000).

The law does not incorporate the word “Indigenous” into its descriptive list of what constitutes heritage goods. In a broad and general manner, Dominican legislation has proven rather abstract in its description of how the state can intervene with cultural matters. Institutions and individuals see the state as ineffectual within the heritage sector. There has been no specific roadmap for tackling how better to engage communities with the country’s archaeological heritage. The concept of “Indigenous heritage” has long been disassociated from legislative language. The architectural vision of heritage, as based on colonial architecture, has dominated preservation and protection discussions, and research on the vast archaeological heritage has been relegated (Ulloa-Hung 2009).

Moreover, national news outlets have pointed out how inefficient the state has been in applying the legislation, and the following reasons have been cited:

lack of effective mechanisms to implement sanctions, lack of a cultural heritage inventory, deficiencies in the application of the legislation when it comes to archaeological heritage, capriciously and poorly done works of conservation, orphaned regulations for the material cultural heritage, no protection for immaterial culture, Eurocentrism, supplanting of skills, centralization, budget issues, and abandonment of Republican-era cultural heritage (Espinal 2016, personal translation)

Yet nothing happens. Since 2009, there have been proposals to modify the legislation to include the recognition of private citizens' ownership of heritage objects, even when heritage is under the safeguard of the state. The efforts have not been successful, as a comprehensive agreement between the different parties' interests has not been reached. A 2017 draft, commonly described as a proposal of a law, went even further in stipulating how swiftly the state could act to intervene to protect and recuperate what is considered to be under the safeguard of the state. Nevertheless, the current regulations are only referenced in printed materials. The topic of governmental regulation in the heritage sector tends to only come to light in theoretical discussions at conferences or in media articles when criticizing the state of some museums. The different heritage institutions have overlapping responsibilities, and the heritage agencies are understaffed and have under-skilled personnel overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the legislation. Heritage institutions have management systems that are obsolete, and there are still significant issues of unclear centralization protocols that have to be considered for the legal registration and conservation of public and private Indigenous heritage collections.

The different Dominican government entities that deal with the conservation, preservation, and protection of the country's Indigenous heritage stand at odds with each other, as there are still no clear regulations explicitly on how and who cares for Indigenous heritage. The Ministry of Culture has under its umbrella several institutions that overlap in duties and lack an understanding of how public and private Indigenous heritage collections are to be managed, and what are the specific responsibilities of each public agency that is supposed to supervise the implementation of heritage regulations.

The concerns related to the legislative aspects of managing Indigenous heritage collections can be recognized in Lyndsay's (2012) legal and moral claims of belonging. The simplicity of the presentation of Indigenous heritage narratives through public and private collections aligns with Lindsay's argument of how objects have been used to manipulate political discourse and how looting has, in some instances, become a glorified act (2012). As recounted in the history of the development of heritage legislation (Chapter 4) and in interviews with participants in the study (Chapter 6), in the Dominican Republic, looting has taken place for decades in spite of all archaeological objects being considered property of the state.

Despite the numerous heritage laws and the regulatory mechanisms that the Dominican government has created, implementation has been poor at best—and, in the case of monitoring, almost nonexistent—for over a century. The deficient implementation and monitoring have hindered access to Indigenous heritage collections on many levels. As the monitoring mechanisms have not been properly put into effect, different communities have had limited access to the knowledge that the study and enjoyment of these collections generate. As the poor implementation and monitoring have remained throughout time, the level of access to collections has remained the same. Neither public nor private collections that exhibit Indigenous heritage objects have been forced to make changes to how they allow people to see objects or how documentation is to be kept or expanded. The stagnant legislation and the lack of action in catching up to museological standards have led to many missed opportunities to address the paradigm shift of focusing less on the classification of objects at museums and more on what people may learn from them. Better implementation and monitoring of heritage legislation can provide opportunities to connect communities and collections through multivocal and inclusive initiatives by having local communities at the heart of the design of such connections.

7.3.4 Attitudes toward access to Indigenous heritage collections

As explained in earlier chapters, for the present research, “access” refers to how people obtain information about Indigenous heritage collections. The access could be physical: through visits to public and private museums or seeing a private citizen’s collection in a private space. Access also refers to viewing printed media or digital forms of books, magazines, articles, photographs, videos, or cultural and educational activities related to the island’s Indigenous peoples in which objects created by them are featured or discussed.

Survey respondents consider having access to Indigenous heritage collections valuable in understanding Dominican society and history. The more collections are available for access, the more people assume they will learn. The survey responses helped identify the value assigned to Indigenous heritage collections and the types of activities that could motivate members of the educational, heritage, and local communities to learn more about them, feel more connected, and become more engaged to contribute to identity discussion and participate in preservation efforts. According to the survey results, the respondents want better access to Indigenous heritage collections because they think it would give them more knowledge on the topic. They believe that learning about the origins of the objects,

understanding the collections better, having greater access to research, and learning how to care for the objects could help lead them to a better understanding of Dominican history and society.

Survey respondents highly value arts and crafts, cultural events with explanations, materials made available through the internet, and dance and theater activities as possible avenues for connecting Indigenous heritage collections with communities. Further, the top three activities that were of high interest to community members are visiting archaeological sites, learning how objects are made, and learning about Indigenous lifeways. The responses suggest a keen interest in interactive approaches to obtaining more information than what is currently presented in museum exhibitions and collections.

Even though respondents indicated that their primary access to Indigenous heritage collections has been through mandatory school visits or guided tours, the majority also indicated wanting to access more collections to acquire more knowledge on Indigenous heritage. Because most of the exhibition scripts were designed between 10 and 40 years ago, the diversity of Indigenous heritage is not adequately portrayed in the current exhibitions. Respondents see them as having outdated information. Therefore, their wanting access to more Indigenous heritage collections suggests that they assume they will obtain more robust information about Indigenous history.

The interviews revealed that while the majority of participants have a professional academic background, their interest in heritage-related work stems from a childhood or early adulthood interest in history or culture. They often shared memories related to early experiences with heritage objects, museums, or oral histories told by teachers or parents. Exposure to heritage collections in the respondents' early education years had the long-term effect of their forming emotional connections with these collections and may have influenced their later interest in heritage-related work. The early relationship with such objects is reflected in literature on the psychological and social reasons for collecting (Pearce 1999; 1992). Early heritage-related experiences also seemed to have been vital for public officials whose posts were related to heritage management, even when their posts were politically assigned.

In the cases of the collectors consulted, most of them began collecting artifacts in their youth after hearing from parents or teachers about Indigenous histories and the sherds that are still found on public and private land in most provinces in the country. Some even

indicated that they were still in possession of the first objects they had found. The literature regarding psychological reasons for collecting supports these findings too. For example, Susan Pearce (1992, 92) addresses how “collections are a significant element in our attempt to construct the world, and so the effort to understand them is one way of exploring our relationship with the world”. Early connections with objects seem to have been an essential part of deciphering cultural meaning for the people interviewed. Therefore, early exposure to Indigenous heritage objects signals opportunities to better understand and connect with local history. All the collectors expressed having the desire, since the time they started collecting, for a publicly accessible museum for their collections. The desire seems to have continued into adulthood, as half of the collectors consulted had invested their resources in either institutionally forming museums or turning their personal and family spaces into exhibitions, for the most part free of charge to those interested in visiting. The collectors interviewed who have not opened their private collections to the public expressed the hope of finding the financial support to be able to open a museum. All the collectors with open exhibitions also wished to have more economic support to improve the conditions in which their collections are shown.

The interview participants’ strong emotional links with the history of the objects seemed to drive their collecting practices. Several collectors indicated still having an interest in collecting, and expressed the duty of protection they feel, as they view their collecting practices as a way to prevent objects from being taken out of the country illegally. The poor level of implementation of the country’s heritage legislation also contributes to such a view, as the focus of care within the archaeology and museum fields continues to be on objects and not on the study of the context of these artifacts. This ostensibly patriotic motive seems to undermine the damage to the archaeological record that the purchase of these decontextualized objects does. The collectors do not seem to acknowledge that significant historical information is lost when the objects are taken out of their archaeological context. Contextless objects are deprived of details that can enrich the Indigenous narrative that the study of archaeological sites reveals. Although the majority of collectors expressed at least a basic knowledge of the legislation in terms of their role as custodians, not owners, of the objects, it seemed that even those who were no longer collecting would keep doing it if they had the resources. By contrast, those who continued to collect wished for an even higher capacity to collect. They see their role as that of protectors rather than liabilities to the heritage market cycle.

The patterns that emerged from interviewees' concerns may hold insights as to what could be given priority for improving the attitudes of members of the educational, heritage, governmental, and local communities toward collections access. The interview responses showed that the most common concern was the protection of Indigenous heritage collections—from theft and illicit trafficking, inadequate monitoring, insufficient inventories, and destruction of sites due to looting and urban or touristic development, as respondents acknowledge the destruction of valuable heritage information. Another frequent concern of the interview participants was education, as all respondents believed that there is a pressing need to improve how Indigenous heritage is taught, based on the use of outdated materials in schools, outdated displays in museums, lack of research, and poorly trained teachers. The participants expressed concern over the value people assign to Indigenous collections; their responses signaled a need to make it more evident how vital collections are toward understanding Dominican society. The lack of political will to implement heritage legislation, enact protection measures, and have adequately trained heritage professionals overseeing the care of collections could wrap up a five-point heritage plan to connect communities with Indigenous heritage collections by improved efforts in protection, education, value, personnel, and political will. The literature covering the interplay of education and heritage (Con Aguilar 2018 et al.; Lindh and Haider 2009) demonstrates the adjustments that must be made both in the classroom—incorporating effective and low-cost teaching strategies to create better connections between curriculum content and local heritage—and in museums, through improved documentation efforts to incorporate better object displays and other communication strategies into the museum education approach.

7.4 Ways of accessing Indigenous heritage collections through multivocality and inclusiveness

The third research question of the present study focused on learning how communities access Dominican Indigenous heritage collections. Results showed that most collections are accessed through the traditional model of school visits and primarily contemplative guided tours. The traditional school visit is led by a museum guide who tends to restate the information printed on the panels and labels of the display cases, which proceed in chronological order. Students and teachers are usually passive listeners.

In the Dominican Republic, the Ministry of Education encourages visits to museums through curriculum-based lesson planning for the fourth through sixth grades. The participation of schools is generally limited to guided tours as part of mandatory school visits;

guided tours were the activities cited by most survey respondents, especially for the National District and the provinces of La Romana and La Altagracia.

Survey respondents believed that the main challenges in making Indigenous heritage collections more accessible relate largely to finances, followed by personnel issues and helping people understand the value of Indigenous heritage collections. Surprisingly, the survey respondents did not perceive exhibition design to be as much of a challenge as the interview participants did. As interview participants qualified museum displays as outdated and static, it was expected that survey respondents were also considering the design of exhibitions to be a challenge.

No museum in the Dominican Republic is capable of sustaining itself economically without public or private subsidies for people to enjoy their exhibitions or participate in educational programs. Museums are able to open to the public due to a combination of inadequate subsidies, donations, fees for entrance and participation in activities, sponsorships, and voluntary work, but usually operate at a loss. Private museums tend to be funded by collectors or foundations that act as administrative umbrellas. This is a significant factor in maintaining operations to serve the public, including the stable influx of school visits on annual excursions as part of history-related holidays. There is very little chance that any of the Indigenous heritage collections open to the public today will, in the coming years, be able to afford new museographical presentations on their own, in which current museological tendencies and theories can be incorporated into new displays.

Most public or private institutions with Indigenous heritage collections open to the public in the Dominican Republic provide free entry or charge low entrance fees. Only the collections under private care seem, over time, to have sustained their programmatic offerings to facilitate educational access beyond guided tours, creating programs for families, publications, conferences, and teacher training and other educational resources on how best to conduct a school visit. The private sector has more stability of management, as collectors tend to maintain economic support over time for the continued display of their exhibited collections. The directors of private collections tend to stay in their posts for longer terms than politically assigned heritage management posts. (These terms usually vary: new directors of public museums are appointed either every four years, or several times during a party's governmental term.) The high turnover of politically assigned public posts in the

heritage sector tends to negatively impact the continuity of programs through which communities generally access museums beyond school tours.

The heritage sector's low wages for publicly run collections and politically appointed positions are reflected in the poorly trained staff. The centralization of administration through the Ministry of Culture, a ministry that has been widely known for poorly funded budgets and department heads who lack the proper training to oversee their departments, does not contribute to the development of the staff's capacity to help regulate the custody or protection of Indigenous heritage or care for the preservation of the collections it oversees.

7.4.1 Access through the establishment of institutions

Based on the review of the collection documentation, a collecting boom occurred in the Dominican Republic from the late 1940s to the early 1990s. Most museums were established between the 1970s and early 1980s when fieldwork in the country did not use the latest scientific standards to excavate and collect archaeological artifacts. During this time, collectors created structures to make their private collections accessible to the public. Other collectors donated or sold the rights to custody of their private collections to established public institutions that receive visitors. These practices became a widely accepted cultural phenomenon in the Dominican Republic and can still be perceived today. There was a decline in the creation of publicly accessible Indigenous heritage collections after the forgery scandals that affected both public and private institutions.

Accounts affirm that the forgery scandals also affected scientific and academic archaeological research in the country. The Museo del Hombre Dominicano began to carry out less field research, negatively impacting the potential for academic development in the field. The stagnated academic development eventually led to a drop in professionals in the archaeology field with a formal education in the Dominican territory, and the closure of the only archaeology program at the university level. It is safe to say that this chain of events has further limited the country's capacity for professional development in archaeology. Hence, the reduction of the state's capability to support the protection of archaeological sites and the implementation and monitoring of heritage legislation that can potentially increase the chances of better preserving Indigenous heritage sites and collections.

7.4.2 Access through education

Interview respondents believed that Indigenous heritage collections have always been accessible to the public through museum visits, especially for the use of the education community. The majority of interview participants also believed, however, that the pedagogical visits were deficient due to the traditional nature of the visits and outdated museographies. This shows that the idea of access is directly related to physical access to collections on display via exhibitions.

The present study shows that there is ample support for strengthening access to Indigenous heritage collections through educational efforts. The support for improved didactic strategies to address the Indigenous history of the island of Santo Domingo is corroborated by Eldris Con Aguilar's (2019) study on this topic. During the inquiries conducted as part of the research, all interview participants mentioned educational issues as an area of concern, and survey respondents found learning and better understanding the collections to be important pursuits. The respondents' beliefs on how collections are accessed and how education can be made better correspond to their opinions on what could motivate people to learn more about Indigenous heritage collections.

Most of the respondents' answers indicate that better educational tools are needed to get people more interested in learning about Indigenous heritage through collections. The responses reflect a need to include what may be classified as the 'basic strategies' generally found in museums. Educational offerings in museums with these types of collections are primarily limited to guided tours, mostly on mandatory visits, and build on colonial narratives about the country's history found in the textbooks about Dominican culture used in formal education (Con Aguilar and Hofman 2019). Based on the survey responses, basic strategies were listed as the elements needed to be in place to create connections with heritage collections: engaging explanations, exhibit design, educational materials, publications, videos, and overall communication.

The emphasis on educational measures in the responses can be linked to Weil's (1999) paradigm shift, which focuses more on services to the public than strictly on object-based interactions. Hooper-Greenhill's (2007) take on education, and the different interpretive communities that may be involved in museum interpretation activities is similar. Furthermore, the assignment of meaning to objects as part of interpretation strategies and the possibilities of object-less interpretations as museum strategies (Davis 2007) serve as guiding

light to address the respondents' education-based concerns. Highlighting these concerns can lead to raising public awareness for the need to preserve heritage collections and archaeological sites and improve the way people learn about Indigenous history.

Another opportunity seen among the possibilities for connection through education is the incorporation of oral history into heritage curricula, as well as programs designed to help interpret objects in museums with Indigenous heritage collections. As Pesoutova (2019) has demonstrated, concepts of medicinal histories and healing landscapes may contribute significantly to the revision of Indigenous transculturation and a broader understanding and appreciation of the Indigenous legacy within Caribbean culture. The symbolism found in agricultural, medicinal, and ritual resources may hold the key to creating connections between communities and collections that will guarantee a stronger commitment to preserving and protecting local cultural resources from the past. Multivocal and inclusive community empowerment is necessary for any connections to contribute to the incorporation of these Indigenous histories in today's multicultural and multiethnic society with its many cultural backgrounds and diverse histories.

According to participants interviewed and surveyed in different communities, better connections with Indigenous heritage collections can be made by improving the educational content that teachers have to use to teach about the Indigenous heritage of the country. The majority of respondents indicated that both formal and informal education initiatives are a significant channel for such connections. Formal education reforms are widely demanded, and critiques denounce how museums have not been proactive about their educational programming. As respondents equate greater access to Indigenous heritage collections with acquiring greater knowledge of them, the museums' inability to present a complete picture of Dominican history hinders access. The survey responses suggest that people recognize a higher cultural diversity of Indigenous people beyond what is found in the collections currently opened to the public.

A critical—and perhaps decolonizing—look at how museums have presented Indigenous heritage narratives through exhibitions and how the formal school system has done the same through books and curricula is a significant first step in creating connections for a better understanding of Indigenous societies' contributions to society today. Understanding better the value of Indigenous heritage collections may be one of the most important conduits for connecting communities that can help foster multivocal and inclusive

actions. The formal educational system can be a bedrock for the establishment of appreciation structures that encourage early engagement for the young members of the educational community—the main source of museum audience in the Dominican Republic.

7.4.3 Access through displays

Communities have been accessing Indigenous heritage collections through public and private museums that have tended to present large displays of accumulated objects in showcases. The general tendency of archaeologists to use excavated cultural material as the primary historical evidence for informational discourses prevailed up to the 1950s. Displays tended not to examine objects in relation to society (Pearce 1990). The presentation of the Indigenous heritage collections at most of the public and private museums in the Dominican Republic also took its cue from this scientific influence of the times, which has even trickled down to museums formed in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, the emphasis placed on definitions of cultures, chronologies, and migrations continues to be evident in Dominican archaeology (Curet 2011). This emphasis can also be recognized in the exhibition design of all the museums created from 1972 to the present. The majority of museums have chronological displays that highlight the academic and scientific discourse of the 1970s, where the objects were the center of attention in the visual narratives. At least for the public museums with Indigenous heritage collections, this tendency to display collections based on chronology remains to this day. This general vision corresponds to a traditional attitude in archaeology and anthropology by which the role of museums with Indigenous heritage collections is to exhibit the objects of these Indigenous cultures when they made them (Chan 2010; Pearce 1990).

The respondents of the surveys and interviews seemed to be less tolerant of static and unattractive exhibits and have high expectations of museums moving to media-oriented exhibitions. Particularly for heritage managers and public officials, the need to have attractive displays was on par in importance with the need to have more solid educational offerings.

7.4.4 Access through the hills

While conducting the research, opportunity to participate in the observation of activities in the Loma de Guayacanes, Loma de El Flaco, and El Carril communities were seen as examples of how critical museology could forge local connections and engagement with Indigenous heritage objects. The observations of activities in the early part of the project—the first community meetings and on-site visits to archaeological excavations—

revealed cautious reactions from residents. Local community members exhibited tension in their questions and interaction with local and international researchers. Some showed signs of social withdrawal by merely listening and keeping their distance. Even a local public official disagreed with what was being presented and showed antagonism by openly expressing that many people in the community thought that the excavation work was targeted toward searching for gold. Although some influential local community leaders denied having those thoughts, most of the attendees at the initial meetings were silent and reserved (notes on first community meeting, August 2013, El Molino, Loma de Guayacanes).

As the community meetings and informal gatherings with neighbors became a regular occurrence for researchers and the local community, the interactions began to steer toward asking questions and providing opinions on the part of local community members. As local inhabitants' informal interactions with the project team members increased, the feelings of familiarity mollified the shyness initially observed. Local participants wanted to know why the project was interested in their geographical area. Once they understood the location's historical importance, local inhabitants began sharing local tales and family histories. On several occasions, these conversations led to site visits related to local historical accounts, and local community informants to eventually participate in the project's audiovisual documentation.

The participation of the local communities of La Loma, El Carril, and Cruce de Guayacanes in the Nexus 1492 project has allowed for observing the early disconnect between the local community members and the past hidden beneath the soil of different archaeological sites. As the landscape changed in the centuries after the colonizers blazed through the mountains, imposing new economic and religious models, the evidence of the original creators of Indigenous cultural material became literally and metaphorically covered in layers of soil and cultural transformation. Cow feeding plots and modern cemeteries have covered the sites, and heritage objects have been buried in the different layers. At times, municipal roads have been laid through the middle of large Indigenous settlements that have been silenced by the passage of time and have faded from the collective memories of the communities as the last living links to the Indigenous past pass away. Their stories have never made it into schoolbook discussions about modern Dominican culture, a fact that reflects how the prevalence of the colonial vision of Indigenous heritage remains.

As open field visits became a regular event in the communities, the discussions about the objects increased, as the locals expressed great curiosity about the value of the excavated cultural material. These interactions became the collaborative engine that drove the local community to determine its involvement. Community leaders, neighborhood associations, local government officials, and individual community members became regular participants in project activities, openly voicing how they were connecting the knowledge the project helped uncover with their own understanding of local history. At the beginning of the project, members from consulted residents in the Valverde province believed that the area's only link to Indigenous history was related to the Paso de Los Hidalgos—the trail Spanish invaders/colonizers/ followed cutting through different native settlements—and that it was only at museums that they could see Indigenous objects. Most had to visit the museums in Santo Domingo to learn more about Indigenous culture.

Eventually, field visits to the excavation sites, the collaborative development of exhibitions on the scientific and cultural knowledge obtained from research in the area, and informal heritage discussions led to a deeper understanding of the community's history. As the idea of Dominican national history has developed within a larger narrative of civilization being brought about by conquest, local narratives have remained in obscurity. The incorporation of Indigenous history into that of the local community is crucial. It was important to observe community members' reactions to learning that the area has been continuously populated since AD 800. This moment served as a turning point for many local residents, who only then understood the longevity of their local community's connection with the landscape. By the end of the project, it was appreciated that a sense of pride had formed in local community members' cultural presentations during the annual community days. This led to an organized attempt to open sharing spaces to combine the exhibition of archaeological objects with their religious singing and demonstrations of oral and craft traditions.

7.5 A cultural house for the contextualization of access to local Indigenous heritage

At the end of the Nexus 1492 project in 2019, the local community within the Cruce de Guayacanes embarked on a project to open a cultural space that would be run by volunteer community members. The project has come to be known as the *casa cultural* (cultural house). The *casa cultural* ties in with the critical museology approach of collections assemblages being designed by local narratives. Combining object displays that reflect the historical

context of the Indigenous past as unearthed by the Nexus 1492 project with stories from the contemporary community allows the community to mediate their own local history. The community's wish to have replicas of the objects found in nearby excavations attests to their understanding of the need to preserve and protect cultural material. They see the house as an opportunity to integrate local stories about their Indigenous past into their community life.

The documentaries produced as part of the Nexus 1492 project ([https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/Nexus 1492/documentaries](https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/Nexus_1492/documentaries)) have highlighted many of these local stories, relating them to current religious celebrations, traditions, personal accounts, local craft products, as well as to medicinal practices based on plants, including those used by the Indigenous population. The creation of the *casa cultural* can be considered part of the deconstruction of traditional exhibitions, as proposed by critical museology. Technology can play an important role in transforming this project into a virtual cultural house as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to affect poor rural communities in the Dominican Republic. The access to local narratives through virtual engagement and digital resources may prove transformative, as the distance is reduced, and information can be provided at the convenience of younger and more technologically savvy generations.

By the conclusion of the project research, the initial adverse reactions had primarily been replaced with more engagement and sharing between local community members and research project members. The researcher's presence in the local community during her stay at the project's archaeological center in Loma de Guayacanes and her welcomed participation in regular community activities or celebrations during fieldwork months were signs of acceptance in the area. As the project years went by, local community members showed more regular participation in activities and gatherings (notes on informal conversations with El Molino, Loma de Guayacanes residents, 2016–2018).

Observations revealed that local community reactions gradually became more positive, as expressions of solidarity were evident at the community-initiated gatherings were done to celebrate and highlight the work done through the Nexus 1492 project. The gatherings held between 2013 and 2019, the six years of the project where team members were actively excavating, provided opportunities to identify how reactions had evolved positively throughout the project. These reactions were noted through social familiarity in the interactions of project members and local inhabitants, free expressions of opinions, jokes,

demonstrations of satisfaction, circulating information learned from project activities, and the incorporation of opinions and clarified information from local community members.

7.6 Integration of Indigenous heritage beyond traditional museum borders

In his attempt to operationalize critical museology within the context of Indigenous heritage collections and community connections, Anthony Shelton (2013) finds that this approach to museology

is also crucial for developing new exhibitionary genres, telling untold stories, rearticulating knowledge systems for public dissemination, reimagining organizational and management structures, and repurposing museums and galleries in line with multicultural and intercultural states and communities (7).

Shelton's approach allows for an exploration of how communities in proximity to archaeological sites can integrate the cultural knowledge derived from archaeological research with local cultural manifestations.

This idea suggested an inquiry to identify the extent to which critical museology could be used as an underpinning to connect communities and Indigenous heritage collections. Specifically, testing the idea of going beyond the museum's physical structures in Laguna Salada was of applicable interest. The proximity of the Loma de Guayacanes and El Carril communities to Nexus 1492's archaeological research sites proved to be ideal for such an inquiry, since the communities are situated near El Paso de Los Hidalgos in Valverde Province, northwestern Dominican Republic.

As an integral part of the project's development, creating community connections has been instrumental in raising awareness of the area's rich historical context as the initial hub of the colonial forces expanding into the Americas. At the national level, direct access to significant Indigenous heritage collections is mostly found either in the capital or in major tourist areas in the country. The immediate access to collections in the Valverde area is limited to one private collection that is based in a former math professor's home and is mostly accessible to the schools in the area.

The literature acknowledges museums' need to empower audiences through critical reflection as well as the need for more substantial community engagement or interactions to be able to connect objects with their embedded cultural knowledge (Ariese 2018; Chan 2010). Exploring local histories as part of interpretation repertoires (Crooke 2010) also helps contextualize activities that involve community members over a sustained period, in which

the landscape, traditions, and local heritage objects that give rise to defined cultural manifestations can incorporate newly understood facets of history.

7.7 Technology for access and protection

The present study shows that digital resources are considered a viable way to access information about Indigenous heritage collections in the future. Museum research on technology shows that digital resources have allowed access for new audiences (Burton Jones 2008) and considers digitalization as providing connections between people and objects beyond the physical realm (Hogsden and Poulter 2012).

Despite the technological limitations of the Dominican Republic in terms of internet connectivity, as studies have indicated, most respondents reported using a computer at home and getting internet access through their home computer or via a mobile phone (Cruz Campusano 2014; Dominguez and Lara 2016). Previous studies have shown that teachers tend to know more about social media, website navigation, and the use of electronic mail (Cruz Campusano 2014). Survey respondents suggested that teachers agree that social media and electronic mail are the best ways to obtain information. The high percentage in the use of these technologies among the students who responded to the survey could be due to age. Television was considered the third-best way to obtain information about cultural activities and it was used by older respondents.

Furthermore, respondents listed the most convenient digital resources as digital books, databases, and magazines, in keeping with the preferences expressed by younger audiences. The majority of respondents indicated that having the information in a digital format for free was either “important” or “very important.” It was also deemed important to have photographs of the objects in collections in digital form. Other important assets to have in digital format were scientific research on the collections and a map of the collections as cultural resources. Surprisingly, only a few of the respondents listed it as important to have inventories in digital form. These responses indicate that technology represents opportunities for the dissemination of information, whether it is used for marketing or for learning, when regularly incorporated as a classroom resource. Significant digitization and digital engagement projects could be justified as a way to connect with wider audiences.

Studies in the scholastic literature show the potential of technology to expand access to Indigenous heritage collections through digitization as a means to create connections with

the collections (Hogsden and Poulter 2012; Srinivasan et al. 2010; Scheiner 2008). With the descriptive inventory of collections in Chapter 5, the collections' geographic distribution serves as a basis for mapping collections found in different communities along with educational resources that may act as connecting hubs to archaeological sites. Studies on cultural mapping have demonstrated the usefulness of heritage information for planning and educational purposes (Bastias 2013; British Columbia 2010).

Technology use is not meant to be a substitute for creating connections to heritage objects and learning directly from the wealth of historical and cultural information embedded in museum objects. Results obtained through the survey and interviews show technology as a more viable road to accessing heritage information as the country provides better technology infrastructure to its citizens. Connecting digital information about the collections with digital educational resources can also serve as one of the main avenues for accessing cultural knowledge for residents of provinces far from the collections or archaeological sites open to the public. As technology use increases in the Dominican Republic, especially within the school system, the digitization of Indigenous heritage collections may become one of the most efficient tools for connecting communities with heritage information. Knowing where Indigenous heritage collections are and what types of resources are found in different geographic offers can be a powerful planning asset for schools and teachers in addressing the history of the island's original settlers. Mapping collections and resources can produce a catalog of cultural information available to communities wishing to connect with Indigenous heritage collections at new levels. As survey and interview respondents have indicated a desire to learn more about the collections in order to better understand Dominican society, new options for accessing information may bring about a transformation in how communities interact with the cultural knowledge that Indigenous heritage collections possess.

Another layer of benefit to using mapping of collections as an educational resource could be linked to the communication of legislative information. Including heritage legislation information in technological mapping efforts may help increase awareness of the law among the different communities that desire more access to Indigenous heritage collections. Having information on the laws and regulations—how they can be applied for heritage protection—may help increase the knowledge of how Indigenous heritage collections under public and private care are to be managed and protected. The use of social media, as well as sharing and collaborative digital platforms, can help public officials, heritage managers, and collectors better communicate information about collections.

Virtual experiences may be linked with virtual spaces to generate new ways of learning about Indigenous heritage collections, even in the face of the geographical distances that tend to limit physical access. Nexus 1492 is working on a digital platform to develop an exhibition of the successful results of the different studies carried out within the scope of the transdisciplinary project. The transformation of the exhibition “Caribbean Ties” into a virtual interactive tool (<https://web.virtualcarib.com>) may prove to be the most dynamic way to reach local communities as technology continues to improve through mobile connectivity, even in rural places. The virtual space can become a hub for accessing heritage information and scientific studies conducted in the different communities that have embraced the project. This space is seen as a resource that may address precisely what the communities consulted in the study want: to understand the collections better.

CHAPTER 8. Conclusion and way forward

8.1 Critical community connections for preserving and protecting Indigenous heritage collections

This study contributes to the field of heritage management by highlighting the connections that can be made between collections and communities. The research contributes to the groundwork for a practical approach for the creation of multivocal engagements and inclusive meeting points for cultural self-determination that seeks to connect with the Indigenous heritage in the Dominican Republic under public and private care.

Under-documented collections and poorly implemented heritage legislation have contributed to continued disconnect from both public and private Indigenous heritage collections. Integrating communities in order to involve them in enriching object histories is one meaningful mode of connection with collections under public and private custody. It is also a way to create a community-based working structure that can be used to incorporate more African collections and in an inclusive manner, contribute to the reflection of the current invisibility of another important aspect of Dominican heritage.

Access to Indigenous heritage collections is currently limited to individuals in the collections' geographically centralized locations but focusing too narrowly on physical visits to museums limits the possibilities for connections between collections and communities. Technology provides a simpler, creative method for disseminating heritage information in ways that can allow communities to determine the type of access and connections they wish to have based on specific and general interests.

The transformation of the current educational and display models used in public and private collections represents the main pathway for creating more viable and realistic connections between communities and Indigenous heritage collections. If heritage managers think of museums as existing beyond their own walls, communities can work with museums to choose their own display models. The support of public officials could even fuel the creation of spaces for heritage displays while communities are working with museums to create exhibitions. The key would be to work in collaboration with communities to incorporate local narratives.

The use of a critical framework to create community connections can help in the design of future Indigenous heritage management strategies and policies through the

meaningful incorporation of a community's opinions and conditions. These collaborations centered on community connections can produce more implementable actions that respond to the realities of the different communities that desire more access to the collections.

This study has investigated some significant and influential factors that can be leveraged to develop community connections. By exploring community concerns and the opinions of heritage managers, public officials, and collectors, a model for the creation of community connections with Indigenous heritage collections can be collaboratively designed to contribute to multivocal heritage engagement and inclusively designed meeting points for cultural self-determination and greater appreciation and protection of these collections.

Adopting a form of Caribbean museology that increases Indigenous heritage appreciation based on a critical museology framework could become a valuable strategy for heritage managers, public officials in the heritage sector, and communities with a nearby Indigenous heritage collection or archaeological site. Within a critical museology context, multivocal engagement and inclusive structures in museums can also help frame the connection of communities with Dominican museums that exhibit Indigenous heritage collections. The examination of historical narratives in museums with Indigenous heritage collections can help challenge the long-established stereotypes of Indigenous cultures as they have been portrayed in schoolbooks (Con Aguilar 2018). This examination can pave the way for establishing educational structures that address historical trauma and grief, as Amy Lonetree (2012) proposes.

A drive to make it evident how museum practice has shaped colonially based interpretations of history in the Dominican Republic will be a major step toward changing how these institutions help shape knowledge. Critical museology can create the conditions to allow connections between communities and Indigenous heritage collections to shape inclusive multivocal engagements that contribute to better preserve and protect archaeological sites and objects, while helping shape the cultural identity of communities by reconciling the past with the future of their cultural heritage and manifestations.

Having the benefits of connecting with collections, highlighted as primary forces in cultural preservation and appreciation, could be transformative for locally developed heritage management initiatives. It can aid in clarifying the role communities and collections play in the preservation of the centuries-old object and cultural repertoire. Museums can benefit from taking action to identify local community members, heritage managers, and heritage public

officials that can help motivate the creation of connections with collections, define the role these individuals will play, and bridge theory and practice to form a concrete path of action. Such a collaborative approach to Indigenous heritage collection programming would benefit those interested in connecting with more collections. It would offer better opportunities for communities to improve their cultural knowledge, lead to more funding sources, and create better mechanisms to collaboratively define achievable initiatives to better protect Indigenous heritage collections and sites while contributing to the shaping of their cultural identity.

Participants in the study expressed concerns over poor educational content, poor protection, lack of personnel, lack of political will to implement policies, and people's poor understanding of the value of Indigenous heritage collections—and hence their history. Yet the expression of these concerns has taken place in a few behind-the-scenes conversations, with scarce media coverage of such complaints. Heritage managers, public officials, and communities need to work together to better articulate the benefits of connecting with collections for the improvement of cultural life and the development of communities. Heritage managers could benefit from dialogs with communities to reflect on what has been done and what needs to be done to address issues of access to collections. The research participants believed that the educational community should have more substantial participation in identifying those actions that contribute to improved access to collections. Their opinions reveal that they see the formal education sector as being at the helm of developing curriculum standards for teaching about Indigenous heritage, and critically reviewing educational materials used in the classroom.

As should be clear, heritage education needs fundamental improvement, and it needs to improve at all academic levels and with input from different types of communities. Improvement requires establishing heritage and archaeological studies at a higher academic level in the Dominican Republic. A collaborative effort should identify the educational and institutional weaknesses of the primary education system and provide an initial academic platform for addressing the shortcomings that communities believe affect them the most. Politics aside, an honest, collaborative assessment of the educational content of Indigenous history teaching will help establish curricular goals for heritage studies in the primary education system as well as at the university level.

The benefits of increasing community access to Indigenous heritage collections will impact both managerial and legislative actions, as more culturally conscious citizens can be

more involved in the development of local initiatives to preserve their local heritage resources. Public officials and heritage managers can benefit from developing better ways to make heritage legislation understood through accessible communication. Although interview participants had a general understanding that legislation to protect Indigenous heritage objects exists, many of these officials could not articulate any opinion about implementing the legislation and the monitoring regulations that protect archaeological collections. Until this situation improves, there will be no capacity for effective institutional communication between the state, museums, and communities. Unless all stakeholders understand the implications for preserving and protecting Indigenous heritage collections, it will be difficult to communicate how everyone must contribute to the critical examination and contestation of traditional museum narratives.

8.2 Indigenous heritage collections and communities in the Dominican Republic

This study sought to describe the scope of Indigenous heritage collections; how legislation impacts access to collections; how communities access collections; how technology may play a role in this access; and what can be done to connect communities with Indigenous heritage collections. The creation of an inventory of Indigenous heritage collections, interviews with heritage managers and collectors, surveys of community members on the perceived value of and access to these collections, and participant observation in community-led cultural activities led to research conclusions that had always felt were issues familiar to heritage institutions. It was not expected to find these issues in the magnitude that the present study revealed.

Under-documented collections and poorly implemented heritage legislation have contributed to the continued disconnect between Indigenous heritage collections, both public and private, and communities. The locations of Indigenous heritage collections are restricted to geographically centralized areas, and contemplative physical visits to museums limit the possibilities for connections between collections and communities. The transformation of current educational and display models used in public and private collections represents the main strategy for creating more implementable and realistic connections between communities and Indigenous heritage collections.

The present research has documented the concern for preserving and protecting Indigenous heritage collections on the part of different types of communities in different provinces throughout the country. This concern can be found among public service officials

within the state-led heritage sector, heritage managers from the private sector, and collectors. All the groups consulted were concerned with the need to improve education on Indigenous history and the care of the collections under public and private custody. As Indigenous heritage collections can become a means to foster critical reflection for members of the educational community, the education sector is a key player in the task to forge connections with cultural material from the past and make it part of the present.

There are few outdated standard archival systems in use for the heritage sector to accommodate the limited information on decontextualized objects. These inadequate systems, coupled with poorly trained personnel and a lack of academic programs in archaeology contribute to the deficient supervision of the heritage departments dealing with archaeological issues. The current archival systems by most heritage institutions limit the ability to investigate the conditions that have led to the heritage laws and regulations described in Chapter 4. With such limited infrastructure for cultural heritage management, it is difficult to understand the levels of threat that Indigenous cultural material has been exposed to since colonial times. Without proper object documentation, the loss of artifacts cannot be accounted for or adequately traced.

Private collectors have been recognized as essential contributors to the formation of collections in the Dominican Republic. They have made some of the country's most important collections accessible, including the creation of nonprofit educational institutions for national and international visitors to enjoy. Some private collectors have followed the regulations published by the Ministry of Culture and have managed to do inventories according to legislation—in some cases by government agencies—and have offered educational programs to improve the understanding of their collections. But even with these established legal parameters and best intentions, no collection in the country that has objects bought on the heritage market has been free from the impact of looting, counterfeiting (copies of museum objects), or invented objects with contemporary designs.

There is legislative opportunity to improve the status of Indigenous heritage collections' preservation efforts through the state's educational mandate for the development of Dominican culture under Law 41-00 (Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana, 2000), specifically through the following articles:

Article 100: The Secretariat of State for Education shall promote the development of culture [...] to help spread it, to help preserve its best manifestations, and to bring it to

the attention of the general public [...] It shall also, to the extent of its scope, contribute to the enrichment and preservation of universal culture and, in particular, that of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Article 101. These are the functions of the Secretariat of State for Education in this field: to rescue and keep alive the national traditions and the diverse manifestations of education and popular culture, and to investigate their roots; to encourage the development of the fine arts; to promote reflection on the Dominican existence on the meaning heritage gives to life, and on Dominican history and social reality.

Monitoring the implementation of laws and regulations requires attention. Disagreements between public officials and private collectors should be set aside to permit discussions of heritage conservation necessities and measures to improve preservation. Heritage actors in both the public and private sectors should make proposals for adjustments to the regulations based on a more realistic notion of the state's capacity to supervise collections. For the custodians of private collections to better understand the legislation and create viable reporting mechanisms that reduce bureaucracy, better communication needs to be established to work in compliance with heritage legislation and regulations. This could also help heritage managers and public officials better articulate the responsibilities and duties of those who oversee the care of Indigenous heritage collections and communicate them to the public through educational and heritage awareness campaigns.

Such campaigns can also serve as a basis for highlighting how communities can contribute to the preservation of Indigenous heritage collections and the roles they can play. This could eventually lead to more diverse groups of people being actively involved in caring for their local Indigenous heritage.

8.3 Recommendations and implications for future research and practice

As the theoretical framework of this study revealed gaps in the literature regarding research on Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic, critical museology provided an opportunity to establish initial discussions about the need to incorporate a multivocal engagement structure in museums to connect communities with Indigenous heritage collections. This research demonstrated that communities consulted believe Indigenous heritage collections can play a role in how the Dominican Republic's Indigenous history is taught beyond the brief tours during school visits to museums. Education impacts access, engagement, expression, and identity formation. It can be considered one of the most critical areas to address theoretically and with in-depth research, specifically in formal education settings at the elementary, high, school, and university levels. Local engagement

and inclusivity need to be at the heart of all aspects to be examined when museums with Indigenous heritage collections want to connect with their communities.

On the level of practice, heritage management in the Dominican Republic requires a transformation. Best practices need to be incorporated as a standard for the management of Indigenous heritage collections. Nevertheless, such best practices need to be analyzed to determine if they can be implemented realistically, considering the political characteristics of state-led heritage management and legislation. Political coherence and consensus on legislative needs are of great importance if the legislation becomes a real tool to be used to protect Indigenous heritage collections under public and private care.

8.3.1 The role of museums in deconstructing the remoteness of the Indigenous past

The resources needed to care for and conserve archaeological collections in remote communities in the Dominican Republic can be cost-prohibitive for most locally led initiatives, especially if they are bound to current museum-like structures. The construction of spaces to display and adequately care for collections can be a daunting task, as it requires operating personnel and subsidies that tend to be concentrated in large urban cities and mostly in Santo Domingo, the capital of the country. It is pertinent to consider alternative ways of presenting information regarding Indigenous heritage in rural areas. New forms of educational and cultural displays can be managed by local communities and used by schools to support local teaching efforts. Indigenous heritage information can be incorporated into local histories and localized educational curricula to contribute to the valorization of objects and archaeological sites, as local communities in rural areas may be able to directly access these often-buried heritage resources in their localities; sometimes, even their homes are on the sites. The incorporation of local voices in the development of cultural self-determination initiatives aimed at better supporting identity-making engagements could help raise awareness of the importance of leaving archaeological sites intact, as well as prevent looting alongside monitoring initiatives led by local communities. Shifting the interest from gathering objects to creating museums or selling to collectors can significantly contribute to the conservation of archaeological information that may be obtained when scientific research capacity improves in the Dominican Republic.

Moreover, shifting the repository mindset toward a mindset focused on knowledge-generation scenarios within local geographic zones may improve the sense of geographical pride generated by an in-depth understanding of one's local history. Creating links with

information derived from heritage objects throughout a locality helps diversify the use of these heritage objects, moving away from the accumulation practices that have turned museums into stagnant deposits of archaeological materials (Wood et al. 2018).

Although outreach activities remain essential to museums that aim to connect with communities at large, collaboration with local people concerning archaeological sites or museums with Indigenous heritage collections (based on an in-depth understanding of the local capacity to sustain cultural heritage conservation efforts) can guarantee productive and sustainable cocreated projects.

Dominican museums with Indigenous heritage collections under public and private care are vulnerable to decreases in visitors and engagement. How public officials, heritage managers, and private collectors respond to the need for change depends on their disposition and abilities to understand the heritage management demands that have emerged in the museum world.

8.3.2 Critical areas of responsibility for the care and connection of Indigenous heritage collections

Whether Indigenous heritage collections are in public or private custody, people related to the heritage field must reconsider how to honor national heritage objects within a framework of greater access to the cultural information collections can generate.

Community members surveyed for the present study showed an interest in both the care and value of collections. They want to know about objects in Indigenous heritage collections beyond what is addressed in the history recounted on school tours. As museum displays of Dominican collections can last 15 to 30 years without any museographical modifications, considerations of adaptable content in the programming that supports the exhibition of objects need to be incorporated in designing strategies to connect collections with communities. For this, heritage custodians should consider how to promote the value of collections for generating knowledge through research, improved documentation efforts, and collaboration with the educational system to improve the way Indigenous history is taught.

Few archaeological research projects have addressed how excavated materials are used after classificatory activities have taken place. In the Dominican Republic, only a handful of projects from the past ten years can be cited as having incorporated specific activities to use objects beyond the “show-and-tell” of exhibitions to display the materials

found on excavations. The Nexus 1492 project has established an innovative, collaborative approach to developing such exhibitions. These exhibitions present the projects' scientific and social results by creating low-cost, attractive displays that reflect the environment of the local communities where the research has taken place. Archaeologists have co-created the exhibitions together with the local community, incorporating present-day crafts done by local community members. This cooperation between archaeologists and local community members has led to increased local community participation in activities. The collaboration has also contributed to researchers often presenting in activities outside the communities how the collaborations work and what is co-produced with them.

The country does not have the academic resources to train archaeologists. There are currently no plans to create an academic program that could build the capacity of people interested in this area of study to incorporate public archaeology best practices for community engagement. Without local archaeologists involved in archaeological projects or the care of sites, it is sometimes harder for local museums to become involved with communities near archaeological sites over the long term. Despite taking place in different locations within the country, most archaeological research depends on foreign university resources, which does create opportunities for the local population to get involved. Still, very few volunteers commit to the laborious activities that are a central component of archaeological fieldwork. Raising awareness of the need for local archaeologists and the importance of local volunteers in archaeological fieldwork would be an initial step toward promoting the value of archaeological research. Such visibility would also highlight the local initiatives that are part of the public outreach efforts to conserve, access, and help interpret collections that end up in museums.

Strengthening volunteer efforts at different levels of research activity can help improve prospects for long-term care of collections. Nevertheless, the lack of museological training for collection care and management in the country also contributes to the degradation of the collections, limiting their use, and often results in a significant number of objects being forgotten as they sit in storage without documentation to account for their existence beyond the shelf space each occupies. Without proper training in collection care, volunteer involvement may prove counterproductive to connection efforts, as volunteers also need training as they become systematically involved with most aspects of collection care.

Poor conservation standards have also resulted in the accumulation of cultural material suffering from years of neglect, as museum personnel or private collectors do not tend to have the resources or updated knowledge to improve the way objects are preserved. The poor conservation of Indigenous heritage collections also limits the development of educational and interpretative links, for which there is also a meager capacity to implement best practices.

This dissertation research confirms that the most important aspects to consider in connecting communities with Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic are:

- To document as extensively as possible how the collections were formed, and to enrich the biographies of the objects by expanding cataloguing practices if they have not been studied in their context;
- To design a collaborative structure that helps identify who the different museum communities are, their needs and interests, and how they are interested in the co-creation of content and activities that could connect them better with collections in a way that makes them feel included, heard, and that shows how their input is reflected in what is exhibited and the way it is exhibited.
- To identify ways to involve community members at all levels when working on interpretive projects, recognizing that large investments of time are needed, both from staff and local community members.
- To create many different options for participation and show how local community participation impacts the implementation of activities or projects.
- To explore how technology can play a role in transmitting information about Indigenous Dominican heritage from different areas and through different types of digital access; and
- To engage in critical reflection on the connections between museums and communities, especially when these are linked to interpretation strategies that are designed by museums to make sure the interests of the communities are represented.

The responses of the members from the different communities consulted yield data that force museums, managers, and officials involved in the care of Indigenous heritage to consider more useful and practical measures to ensure better engagement with and access to

collections and impart better knowledge of them. Based on their answers, a clear message is formed, namely that the participants of the present study all agree that education on the history and heritage of the island's Indigenous people needs to improve. This improvement, however, is not the sole responsibility of the state. It is also the responsibility of Indigenous heritage custodians as a national duty to provide opportunities for expanded physical and intellectual access to collections through more reliable connections.

Even though younger people have expressed the least interest in museums and Indigenous heritage collections, the majority of members of the educational, heritage, governmental, and local community members consulted agree that the knowledge collections generate is vital to better understanding Dominican society, and by extension, who they are. It is here that museums and communities find the most significant niche that can be exploited. The avenues for connecting with Indigenous heritage need to be more dynamic based on the participants' stated main interests:

- Having access to more collections.
- Understanding the origins of the objects.
- Understanding Dominican history in depth.
- Having more access to research on Indigenous history and Dominican culture; and
- Breaking away from traditional visits in order to enjoy activities that engage the senses while learning about scientific and artistic processes.

8.4 Final thoughts

More than just the relics of a lost past that merely confirm its disappearance, the heritage objects in museums have become tangible links to a possible recovery of shared meanings through narrative and performativity (Andermann and Arnold-de Simine 2012, 4).

Interaction with an audience or stakeholders provides opportunities to co-create new narratives that would help Dominican museums develop more inclusive and multivocal engagements that lead to more opportunities for cultural self-determination by connecting to the Indigenous heritage collections available to communities. This dissertation shows how several centuries of neglecting to maintain detailed historical documentation of Indigenous heritage collections has obscured their significance and created a disconnect between objects and both their place and communities of origin.

In a generally encased and decontextualized environment, the Dominican Republic's Indigenous heritage collections are still displayed in glass-enclosed boxes. Individually, the objects in the collections tell stories of the practical needs, design acumen, and manufacturing techniques of the Indigenous people of the Caribbean. As archaeological evidence, artifacts collectively project knowledge of production and networks of economic exchange systems, beliefs, and values (Hofman et al. 2011). Just as heritage sites cannot be considered static, heritage collections (with or without having been scientifically studied) are not static either. They must be reconsidered as opportunities to connect with local communities and generate a greater appreciation of the past. The multidisciplinary study of individual objects, collections, and heritage activities could become a tool to help foster critical thinking in the Dominican Republic and other Caribbean islands. Enhancing studies of Indigenous heritage collections can help audiences reflect upon heritage practices and improve how the Indigenous history is taught, appreciated, and reflected in modern cultural practices.

The possibilities for creating connections between Indigenous heritage collections and communities in the Dominican Republic are both vast and fundamental, with positive outcomes for both communities with limited resources and organizations with different types of structures and budgets. At first glance, these recommendations might seem to be common sense or even reminiscent of approaches that have been implemented in the past. However, until the underlying concerns expressed by the different communities in this study are addressed, attempts to adopt more elaborated and modern museological strategies run the risk of being perceived as fragmented, disorganized, and even elitist.

The creation of heritage management road maps depends on the outcomes desired by the different communities. Different communities require different approaches and actors in tailoring the multivocal strategies for connecting with Indigenous heritage collections. By addressing each community's concerns for multi-vocal identity-making engagements and opportunities for cultural self-determination, many paths can be laid out for addressing personnel issues to help implement the care of heritage collections and the political will needed to manage them better. This process leads, in turn, to an increased appreciation of how Indigenous heritage collections help generate knowledge that contributes to understanding who Dominicans—and Caribbean people—have been, who they are, and who they can be.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Survey

Introducción

Gracias por tomar el tiempo para completar esta encuesta. Es parte de un proyecto de investigación sobre cómo las comunidades interactúan con el conocimiento cultural de las colecciones de patrimonio indígena abiertas al público, y espera identificar mejores prácticas para aumentar el acceso de la comunidad al conocimiento cultural integrado en materiales arqueológicos del Caribe.

1. Ha visitado algún museo con colecciones de patrimonio indígena?

Si _____ Si es afirmativo, a cuál? _____ No _____

Si ha visitado, qué hizo durante su visita? Seleccione todas las que aplican:

Visita obligatoria de la escuela _____

Auto recorrido _____

Recorrido guiado _____

Participó en un taller _____

Usó el audio-recorrido _____

Asistió a una charla/conferencia/seminario _____

Se encontró con amigos _____

Compro libros _____

Visitó la tienda _____

Otro (especificar) _____

Si no ha visitado, por qué no? Seleccione todas las que aplican:

Está muy lejos de donde trabajo/vivo _____

No tengo tiempo para ir _____

No tengo quien me acompañe _____

Es difícil para yo trasladarme _____

Otro (especificar) _____

No estoy interesado _____

Por favor indique por qué no le interesa _____

**2. Qué aspectos cree usted que son importantes sobre las colecciones indígenas?
Seleccione todas las que aplican:**

El tiempo que tienen los objetos _____

La belleza de los objetos _____

Cómo se fabricaron los objetos _____

El material con el que fueron elaborados los objetos _____

Reconozco la forma de los objetos en los que yo uso en mi casa _____

No me relaciono con los objetos de la colección _____

Esto no es importante para mí _____

3. Cuán beneficioso considera usted que son las colecciones de patrimonio indígena para la comunidad?

Muy beneficioso Un poco beneficioso Neutral Para nada beneficioso

4. Qué le interesa personalmente sobre las colecciones de patrimonio indígena?

5. Cuán importante considera usted que es el conocimiento sobre el patrimonio indígena para:

La economía

Muy importante Importante Algo importante Neutral Nada importante

La creación de políticas culturales

Muy importante Importante Algo importante Neutral Nada importante

Entender la sociedad dominicana

Muy importante Importante Algo importante Neutral Nada importante

6. Cuan importante es mantener las colecciones de patrimonio indígena abiertas para visitas?

Muy importante Importante Algo importante Neutral Nada importante

7. Siente que haber visitado la colección de patrimonio indígena lo ha ayudado a entender mejor quién es usted?

Si ____ Quizás _____ Cómo? _____ No ____

8. Le interesaría ser voluntario para crear actividades para la comunidad?

Si ____ Quizás _____ Cómo? _____ No ____

9. Le gustaría tener acceso a más colecciones de patrimonio indígena?

Si ____ por qué? _____

No ____ por qué? _____

10. En su opinión, qué lo haría conectarse mejor con las colecciones de patrimonio indígena que los museos custodian? Seleccione todas las que aplique:

Entender cómo los objetos son cuidados _____

Entender el origen de los objetos _____

Examinar el material con mis propias manos _____

Entender la historia dominicana a profundidad _____

Usar la colección como inspiración _____

Investigar sobre la historia indígena y nuestra cultura de hoy _____

Participar en talleres de temas relacionados al patrimonio indígena _____

Contribuir con mis pensamientos y comentarios sobre exposiciones o planes _____

Aprender sobre políticas públicas y gestión del patrimonio _____

Tener el derecho de usar las imágenes de los objetos _____

Aprender más sobre la herencia indígena de Las Américas _____

11. Por favor indique el orden de valorización de las actividades que a usted le gustaría ver en los museos

Arte y artesanía

Mucho valor Suficiente valor Un poco de valor Neutral Nada de
valor

Eventos culturales explicativos

Mucho valor Suficiente valor Un poco de valor Neutral Nada de
valor

Danza y teatro

Mucho valor Suficiente valor Un poco de valor Neutral Nada de
valor

Material accesible desde el internet

Mucho valor Suficiente valor Un poco de valor Neutral Nada de
valor

12. Cuáles de los siguientes servicios que puede ofrecer un museo con colecciones de patrimonio indígena, en su opinión, son más importantes para servir las necesidades de la comunidad? Escoja las 3 principales de cada categoría:

Material informativo sobre los objetos

Cédulas con texto e imágenes _____

Libros _____

Panfleto _____

Catálogos _____

Revistas _____

Programas culturales

Adultos _____

Niños _____

Adultos mayores _____

Mujeres _____

Tener programas fuera del museo _____

Talleres de capacitación sobre

Cuidado del patrimonio _____

Educación y arqueología _____

Participación comunitaria _____

Arte, historia y arqueología _____

13. Cuáles cree usted que son los retos principales para que los museos hagan sus colecciones de patrimonio indígena más accesibles? Escoja los dos retos principales: 1 para el principal, 2 para el secundario

Recursos económicos _____

Personal capacitado _____

Diseño de la exhibición _____

Hacer entender a la comunidad cuál es el valor de la colección _____

Hacer entender cómo la comunidad puede utilizar la colección _____

14. Cuán interesado estaría usted en las siguientes actividades?

Visitar un sitio arqueológico

Muy interesado Interesado Un poco interesado Neutral No me interesa

Aprender cómo se hicieron los objetos de la colección

Muy interesado Interesado Un poco interesado Neutral No me interesa

Aprender sobre rituales, formas de vida y alimentos indígenas

Muy interesado Interesado Un poco interesado Neutral No me interesa

Experimentar cómo se lleva a cabo una investigación arqueológica

Muy interesado Interesado Un poco interesado Neutral No me interesa

Ayudar a diseñar exposiciones para atraer más a la gente al museo

Muy interesado Interesado Un poco interesado Neutral No me interesa

Como elaborar artesanía inspirada en diseños indígenas

Muy interesado Interesado Un poco interesado Neutral No me interesa

15. Cual es la mejor forma para usted recibir información sobre actividades culturales?

Escoja las 3 principales, indicando la prioridad 1,2 y 3

Teléfono _____

Correo electrónico _____

Volante impreso _____

Redes sociales _____

Periódico _____

Radio _____

TV _____

Por amigos _____

Otro _____

16. Usa usted computadora? Si _____ No _____

Si es afirmativo, usted la usa en:

La oficina _____

En la casa _____

Internet café _____

17. Usted tiene acceso al internet? Si ____ No ____

Si es afirmativo, indique como accede de todas las formas que aplica:

Computadora en la casa _____

Computadora en la oficina _____

Computadora en internet café _____

Computadora en casa de amigos _____

A través de mi teléfono celular, ilimitado _____

A través de mi teléfono celular, solo a Facebook _____

18. Qué tipo de información cree usted que es importante para tener disponible en formato digital? Seleccione todas las que sean necesarias:

Investigaciones científicas sobre los objetos _____

Un inventario de los objetos de las colecciones _____

Fotografías de los objetos con descripciones _____

Mapa de los recursos culturales indígenas por región _____

19. Cuán importante cree usted que es tener información sobre las colecciones indígenas en formato digital disponible de forma gratuita?

Muy importante Importante Algo importante Neutral Nada importante

20. Cual sería el tipo de recurso digital más conveniente para usted?

Indique los 3 principales, priorizando de forma numérica: 1, 2 y 3

CD _____

Libros _____

Revistas _____

Base de datos en línea _____

21. Por favor siéntase libre de compartir cualquier experiencia particular u opinión que ayudaría a mejorar la forma en que los miembros de la comunidad se pueden conectar con las colecciones de patrimonio indígena:

22. Rango de edad 18-25____ 26-35____ 36-45____ 46-55____ 55+____

23. Sexo Femenino ____ Masculino ____

24. Ocupación

APPENDIX B

Survey target groups by location

Type	Description	Location
Education respondents		
Teachers	High School or Basic level schools near a museum/archaeological site	La Romana, SD, Valverde, Puerto Plata
High School Students	High School or Basic level schools near a museum/archaeological site	Puerto Plata, Valverde
University Students	Major universities: U Cattolica, UNIBE Cap Cana	SD, La Altagracia
Heritage/Social Science instructors at universities	Major universities: U Cattolica	SD
Respondents in direct contact with IH collections		
Museum staff	Museums with IH collections: Chavon, Centro Cultural Leon Jimenes	La Romana, Santiago
Respondents with museums in their city		Various provinces
Community members	Provinces with a IH collection/archaeological site	SD, La Romana, La Altagracia, Valverde
Tourism respondents		
Tour guides	Guides that visit museums with groups	La Romana, SD
Media respondents		
Journalists	National newspaper	
Journalists	Journalists that cover cultural events	SD
Arts respondents		
Artists	Artists from various provinces	
Artists		La Romana
Students in Art schools	Art schools in Santo Domingo and	La Romana

	La Romana	
Artisans	With products related to Indigenous heritage	La Romana

Protocol for interviews in person**Protocolo para entrevistas en persona**

(Leer protocolo antes de iniciar la entrevista)

Gracias por aceptar hacer esta entrevista. Me gustaría saber si está de acuerdo con que esta entrevista se grabe para poder facilitar la transcripción. Solo mis supervisores académicos tendrán acceso a estas grabaciones para propósitos de supervisión, y después de la entrevista, serán borradas. Puedo enviarle una copia de la entrevista transcrita si usted lo desea.

(Si está de acuerdo, encender la grabadora).

Gracias por participar de manera voluntaria en esta entrevista. Toda la información discutida en esta entrevista será confidencial. Usted puede hacer preguntas durante el proceso, y puede parar en cualquier momento si se siente incómodo. Puede también durante cualquier parte de la conversación indicar si hay alguna información que quiera compartir conmigo pero que NO quiera que se incluya en la investigación. Usted puede solicitar que su nombre o el nombre de cualquier otra persona sea omitido de la investigación.

El plan es entrevistarle por aproximadamente media. Tengo unas preguntas que me gustaría cubrir durante este tiempo. Si el tiempo se agota, puede que sea necesario interrumpirle para poder cubrir todas las preguntas, o si me lo permite, entrevistarle en una segunda ocasión si usted no puede continuar más allá del tiempo cedido.

Usted ha sido seleccionado como una persona clave a entrevistar como parte de la investigación que estoy realizando sobre las colecciones indígenas de la República Dominicana. La investigación indaga sobre el diseño de la legislación del patrimonio y cómo las comunidades interactúan con el conocimiento cultural de las colecciones abiertas al público. Espera poder identificar mejores prácticas para aumentar el acceso de la comunidad al conocimiento cultural integrado en el material arqueológico del Caribe.

(Tener a mano información del historial profesional de la persona a entrevistar).

Protocol for interviews in writing**Protocolo para entrevistas por escrito**

Usted ha sido seleccionado como una persona clave a entrevistar como parte de la investigación que estoy realizando sobre las colecciones indígenas de la República Dominicana. La investigación indaga sobre el diseño de la legislación del patrimonio y cómo las comunidades interactúan con el conocimiento cultural de las colecciones abiertas al público. Espera poder identificar mejores prácticas para aumentar el acceso de la comunidad al conocimiento cultural integrado en el material arqueológico del Caribe.

Gracias por aceptar hacer esta entrevista por escrito. Toda la información discutida en esta entrevista será confidencial. Solo mis supervisores académicos tendrán acceso a estas respuestas para propósitos de supervisión.

Si hay alguna información que quiera compartir conmigo pero que NO quiera que se incluya en la investigación solo déjeme saber y no se incluirá. Usted puede solicitar que su nombre o el nombre de cualquier otra persona sea omitido de la investigación.

APPENDIX D

Interview questions

A) PREGUNTAS A:

- REPRESENTANTES Y EXREPRESENTANTES GUBERNAMENTALES EN EL AREA DE PATRIMONIO

- GERENTES EN AREAS RELACIONADAS AL MANEJO DEL PATRIMONIO PUBLICO O PRIVADO)

Historial profesional en el área del patrimonio

- Cuál es su puesto actual (o pasado) relacionado al manejo del patrimonio cultural?
- Cuando y por qué se interesó en trabajar en el área de patrimonio cultural o en museos con colecciones de patrimonio indígena?

Conocimiento sobre la legislación y regulación del patrimonio

- Cuál es su opinión sobre la implementación gubernamental de leyes y regulaciones para el manejo de colecciones indígenas públicas y privadas?
- Cuál es su opinión sobre el monitoreo gubernamental a través del tiempo de la implementación de la legislación y la regulación del patrimonio indígena?

Accesibilidad del público

- Cómo ha tenido acceso el público a las colecciones de patrimonio indígena en el pasado y cómo están teniendo acceso ahora?
- Qué cree usted que puede motivar a la gente a aprender más sobre las colecciones de patrimonio indígena?
- Cómo cree usted que el gobierno puede ayudar a que las colecciones de patrimonio indígena sean más accesibles?

**** Tiene alguna sugerencia de algún tema que yo no he cubierto en la investigación que usted considera que es importante tratar?**

B) PREGUNTAS A COLECCIONISTAS PRIVADOS CON COLECCIONES ABIERTAS AL PUBLICO

Razones personales para coleccionar

- Cuando y como se empezó a interesar en temas de patrimonio o arqueología indígena?
- Cómo empezó a coleccionar objetos de patrimonio indígena?
- Todavía colecciona activamente objetos de patrimonio indígena?

Conocimiento sobre la legislación y regulación del patrimonio

- Cuál es su opinión sobre las leyes y regulaciones de colecciones privadas?

- Cuál es su opinión sobre el monitoreo gubernamental de la implementación de las leyes y regulaciones del patrimonio?

Accesibilidad del público

- Cuándo y cómo empezó usted a pensar en abrir al público su colección?
- Cómo han tenido acceso en el pasado las personas a su colección y como lo están haciendo ahora?
- Tiene planes para el futuro de la colección en sí y para el acceso del público a su colección?
- Le gustaría que el gobierno ayudara a que su colección fuera más accesible al público? ¿Cómo?

**** Tiene alguna sugerencia de algún tema que yo no he cubierto en la investigación que usted considera que es importante tratar?**

C) PREGUNTAS A CONOCIDOS COLECCIONISTAS PRIVADOS CON COLECCIONES NO ABIERTAS AL PÚBLICO

Razones personales para coleccionar

- Cuándo y cómo se empezó a interesar en temas de patrimonio o arqueología indígena?
- Cómo empezó a coleccionar objetos de patrimonio indígena?
- Todavía colecciona activamente objetos de patrimonio indígena?

Conocimiento sobre la legislación y regulación del patrimonio

- Cuál es su opinión sobre las leyes y regulaciones de colecciones privadas?
- Cuál es su opinión sobre el monitoreo gubernamental de la implementación de las leyes y regulaciones del patrimonio indígena?

Accesibilidad del público

- Cómo han tenido acceso en el pasado las personas a su colección y como lo están haciendo ahora?
- Tiene planes para el futuro de la colección en sí y para el acceso del público a su colección?
- Le gustaría que el gobierno ayudara a que su colección fuera más accesible al público? ¿Cómo?

**** Tiene alguna sugerencia de algún tema que yo no he cubierto en la investigación que usted considera que es importante tratar?**

SUMMARY IN ENGLISH

As museums face more scrutiny and are being demanded to decolonize, there are opportunities for Dominican museums to adopt a critical perspective and turn their collections and exhibitions into connections to our cultural past, present, and future. Nevertheless, specific research on archaeological collections in the Dominican Republic, the earliest hub of the European invasion, conquest, and colonization of the New World, has been scarce. The present research consists of an exploratory study that seeks to answer the larger question of how Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic can be connected with communities to empower them for constructing a multivocal and inclusive cultural history. Community connections can also contribute to improve preservation and protection efforts and provide insight into how communities, private collectors, and public and private heritage managers view these connections.

There are two main objectives for this study: first, to help identify the scope of Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic in the context of heritage legislation and management, and second, to provide insight into how museums can connect with communities to develop a better understanding of Indigenous heritage collections and thereby help preserve and protect them. The study looked at the nature of Indigenous heritage collections in the Dominican Republic and how these collections have formed. It evaluated how different communities have access to these collections and how such access can be expanded to create inroads for connecting at different levels: for example, beyond the guided tours at architectural sites that are found mainly in larger urban or tourist-heavy areas around the country.

This qualitative study explored how communities can be engaged to critically analyze museum narratives that perpetuate colonial ideas of Caribbean Indigenous extinction which contribute to a disconnection from Indigenous heritage collections. Critical museology and decolonizing methodologies were used as a framework to propose connections that integrate the multicultural and multiethnic community experiences that make up the region to improve how today our society understands and values the legacies of our Indigenous heritage, and how these legacies impact identity formation. The framework was used to determine how to facilitate community connections to Indigenous heritage collections that lead to multivocal engagements and inclusive meeting points for cultural self-determination, by answering the following research questions: RQ1) What is the scope of archaeological collections in the Dominican Republic in terms of where they are located, who has custody of them, who uses

them, and what information about them is available to the public? RQ2) How do current Dominican heritage laws hinder or foster community access to archaeological collections? RQ3) How do communities access Dominican Indigenous heritage collections? RQ4) How can collection mapping and technology play a role in community access and protection of Dominican Indigenous heritage? RQ5) What can be done to connect communities with Indigenous heritage collections?

Data was gathered by the review of documents, conducting surveys and interviews, and through participant observation in local activities to explore the attitudes and types of access to collections different communities have. The main findings of the study show that there are opportunities to connect communities with Indigenous heritage collections by improving access based on multivocal and inclusive approaches for the design of education and exhibition initiatives as well as the representation of cultural practices beyond traditional museum borders. Enhanced documentation systems, geographical decentralization of museums, and increasing awareness of heritage legislation for preservation efforts, also provide opportunities to connect by developing narratives that are important to the community and where they can see their cultural practices represented.

This study provides future scholars with a foundational reference to help deepen their knowledge of Indigenous heritage institutions and their role in the community. The study offers practical suggestions for developing and incorporating critical museology approaches to the creation of community connections with Indigenous heritage institutions in the Dominican Republic. It may also assist heritage managers and public officials in improving how heritage education programs are designed to make the collections more relevant to the communities they aim to serve. Future researchers can also use this study to identify patterns in community involvement that may further demonstrate the value of critically framing heritage institutions' efforts to improve preservation initiatives. The study contributes to the groundwork for a practical approach for the creation of multivocal engagements and inclusive meeting points for cultural self-determination that seeks to connect with the Indigenous heritage in the Dominican Republic under public and private care.

NEDERLANDSE SAMENVATTING

Nu musea steeds kritischer gevolgd worden en verwacht worden te dekoloniseren, zijn er mogelijkheden voor Dominicaanse musea om deze richting in te slaan en hun collecties en tentoonstellingen in te zetten om verbindingen met ons cultureel verleden, heden en toekomst aan te gaan. Specifiek onderzoek naar de archeologische collecties in de Dominicaanse Republiek, het vroegste knooppunt van de Europese invasie, verovering en kolonisatie van de Nieuwe Wereld, is echter schaars. Het onderhavige onderzoek bestaat uit een verkennende studie die een antwoord tracht te vinden op de brede vraag hoe inheemse erfgoedcollecties in de Dominicaanse Republiek kunnen worden verbonden met de lokale gemeenschappen om hen in staat te stellen een multivocale en inclusieve culturele geschiedenis op te bouwen. Connecties met deze gemeenschappen kunnen ook bijdragen tot grotere inspanning tot preservatie en bescherming alsmede inzicht verschaffen in hoe gemeenschappen, privé-verzamelaars en publieke en privé-erfgoedbeheerders deze verbindingen zien.

Deze studie heeft twee belangrijke doelstellingen: ten eerste, het identificeren van de omvang van de inheemse erfgoedcollecties in de Dominicaanse Republiek in de context van erfgoedwetgeving en -beheer, en ten tweede, inzicht verschaffen in hoe musea het contact kunnen aangaan met gemeenschappen om een beter begrip te ontwikkelen van de inheemse erfgoedcollecties en zo te helpen ze te bewaren en te beschermen. Deze studie bestudeert de aard van de inheemse erfgoedcollecties in de Dominicaanse Republiek en hoe deze collecties tot stand zijn gekomen. Evaluatie vindt plaats hoe verschillende gemeenschappen toegang hebben tot deze collecties en op welke wijze deze kan worden uitgebreid om op verschillende niveaus contact te leggen: bijvoorbeeld buiten de rondleidingen op architecturale locaties die vooral te vinden zijn in de grote stedelijke of toeristische gebieden van het land.

Deze kwalitatieve studie onderzoekt de vraag hoe lokale gemeenschappen betrokken kunnen worden in de kritische analyse van museumverhalen die koloniale ideeën over het uitsterven van de Caraïbische inheemse bevolking bestendigen en die ertoe bijdragen dat inheemse erfgoedcollecties niet langer toegankelijk zijn. Kritische museologie en dekolonisiemethodologieën worden gebruikt als het kader om verbanden te opperen die de multiculturele en multi-etnische gemeenschapservaringen integreren die de regio vormen. Dit om begrip en waardering van de erfenis van ons inheemse erfgoed in de samenleving en haar beïnvloeding van identiteitsvorming te bevorderen. Dit raamwerk wordt gebruikt om te bepalen hoe gemeenschappen gemakkelijker in contact kunnen komen met inheemse erfgoedcollecties die leiden tot meerduidige betrokkenheid en inclusieve ontmoetingsplaatsen

voor culturele zelfbeschikking, door de volgende onderzoeksvragen te beantwoorden: RQ1) Wat is de reikwijdte van de archeologische collecties in de Dominicaanse Republiek ten aanzien van waar ze zich bevinden, wie ze beheert, wie ze gebruikt, en welke informatie erover beschikbaar is voor het publiek? RQ2) Hoe belemmert of bevordert de huidige Dominicaanse erfgoedwetgeving de toegang van lokale gemeenschappen tot archeologische collecties? RQ3) Hoe krijgen deze gemeenschappen toegang tot de Dominicaanse inheemse erfgoedcollecties? RQ4) Hoe kunnen het in kaart brengen van collecties en technologie een rol spelen bij de toegang tot en de bescherming van het Dominicaanse inheemse erfgoed? RQ5) Wat kan er gedaan worden om lokale gemeenschappen in contact te brengen met inheemse erfgoedcollecties?

De gegevens zijn verzameld aan de hand van documenten, enquêtes en interviews, en door observatie van deelnemers aan lokale activiteiten om de houding en soorten toegang tot de collecties van de verschillende gemeenschappen te onderzoeken. De belangrijkste bevindingen van deze studie tonen aan dat er mogelijkheden zijn om gemeenschappen in contact te brengen met de inheemse erfgoedcollecties door hun toegang te verbeteren op basis van een multivocale en inclusieve aanpak in het ontwerpen van educatieve en tentoonstellingsinitiatieven en voor de vertegenwoordiging van culturele praktijken buiten de traditionele museumgrenzen. Verbeterde documentatiesystemen, geografische decentralisatie van musea en een groter bewustzijn van de erfgoedwetgeving met het oog op beheer en behoud, bieden ook mogelijkheden om verbinding te leggen met de museumbezoekers door verhalen te ontwikkelen die belangrijk zijn voor de lokale gemeenschappen en waarin ze hun culturele praktijken gerepresenteerd kunnen zien.

Deze studie biedt toekomstige wetenschappers een fundamenteel referentiekader om hun kennis over inheemse erfgoedinstellingen en hun rol in de gemeenschap te verdiepen. Zij biedt praktische suggesties voor het ontwikkelen en integreren van kritische museale benaderingen voor het creëren van gemeenschapsbanden met inheemse erfgoedinstellingen in de Dominicaanse Republiek. Deze studie kan ook erfgoedbeheerders en ambtenaren helpen bij het verbeteren van de manier waarop erfgoededucatieprogramma's worden opgezet om de bestaande collecties relevanter te maken voor de gemeenschappen die ze willen dienen. Toekomstige onderzoekers kunnen deze studie ook gebruiken om patronen in gemeenschapsbetrokkenheid te identificeren die verder de waarde kunnen aantonen van het kritisch kaderen van de inspanningen van erfgoedinstellingen om initiatieven voor beheer en behoud te verbeteren. Zij draagt bij tot het grondwerk voor een praktische aanpak ten behoeve van het scheppen van meerduidige betrokkenheid en inclusieve ontmoetingsplaatsen

voor culturele zelfbeschikking die aansluiting zoekt bij het inheemse erfgoed in de Dominicaanse Republiek onder publieke en private zorg.

RESUMEN EN ESPAÑOL

A medida que los museos se enfrentan a un mayor escrutinio y se les exige que se descolonicen, existen oportunidades para que los museos dominicanos adopten una perspectiva crítica y conviertan sus colecciones y exposiciones en conexiones con nuestro pasado, presente y futuro cultural. Sin embargo, las investigaciones sobre las colecciones arqueológicas en la República Dominicana, el foco más temprano de la invasión conquista y colonización europea del Nuevo Mundo, no han sido abundantes. La presente investigación consiste en un estudio exploratorio que busca responder a la pregunta más amplia sobre cómo las colecciones del patrimonio indígena en la República Dominicana pueden conectarse con las comunidades para empoderarlas en la construcción de una historia cultural multivocal e inclusiva. Las conexiones comunitarias también pueden contribuir a mejorar los esfuerzos de preservación y protección y proporcionar una visión de cómo las comunidades, los coleccionistas y los gestores del patrimonio público y privado ven la formación de estas conexiones.

La investigación tiene dos objetivos principales: en primer lugar, ayudar a identificar el alcance de las colecciones del patrimonio indígena en la República Dominicana en el contexto de la legislación y la gestión del patrimonio, y, en segundo lugar, proporcionar una visión de cómo los museos pueden conectarse con las comunidades para desarrollar una mejor comprensión de las colecciones del patrimonio indígena y así ayudar a preservarlas y protegerlas. El estudio examinó la naturaleza de las colecciones del patrimonio indígena en la República Dominicana y cómo se han formado estas colecciones. Se evaluó cómo las diferentes comunidades tienen acceso a estas colecciones y cómo dicho acceso puede ampliarse para crear vías de conexión a diferentes niveles: por ejemplo, más allá de las visitas guiadas a los sitios arquitectónicos que se encuentran principalmente en las zonas urbanas más grandes o de gran afluencia de turistas en todo el país.

Este estudio cualitativo exploró cómo se puede involucrar a las comunidades para analizar críticamente las narrativas de los museos que perpetúan las ideas coloniales de la extinción de los indígenas del Caribe que contribuyen a la desconexión de las colecciones del patrimonio indígena. Se utilizó la museología crítica y las metodologías descolonizadoras como marco para proponer conexiones que integren las experiencias comunitarias multiculturales y multiétnicas que conforman la región para mejorar la forma en que hoy nuestra sociedad entiende y valora los legados de nuestro patrimonio indígena, y cómo estos legados impactan la formación de la identidad. Este marco teórico se utilizó para determinar cómo facilitar las conexiones de la comunidad con las colecciones del patrimonio indígena

que conducen a compromisos multivocales y puntos de encuentro inclusivos para la autodeterminación cultural, respondiendo a las siguientes preguntas de investigación: 1) ¿Cuál es el alcance de las colecciones arqueológicas en la República Dominicana en términos de dónde se encuentran, quién las custodia y quién utiliza?, ¿Qué información sobre las colecciones está disponible para el público?; 2) ¿Cómo obstaculizan o fomentan las leyes actuales del patrimonio dominicano el acceso de las comunidades a las colecciones arqueológicas?; 3) ¿Cómo acceden las comunidades a las colecciones del patrimonio indígena dominicano?; 4) ¿Cómo puede el mapeo de las colecciones y la tecnología jugar un papel en el acceso de la comunidad y contribuir a la protección del patrimonio indígena dominicano?; 5) ¿Qué se puede hacer para conectar a las comunidades con las colecciones del patrimonio indígena?

Los datos fueron recopilados mediante la revisión de documentos, la realización de encuestas y entrevistas, y a través de la observación participativa en actividades locales para explorar las actitudes y los tipos de acceso a las colecciones que tienen las diferentes comunidades. Las principales conclusiones del estudio muestran que existen oportunidades para conectar a las comunidades con las colecciones del patrimonio indígena mediante la mejora del acceso basada en enfoques multivocales e inclusivos para el diseño de iniciativas de educación y exposición, así como la representación de prácticas culturales más allá de las fronteras tradicionales de los museos. La mejora de los sistemas de documentación, la descentralización geográfica de los museos y el aumento de la concientización sobre la legislación en materia de patrimonio para los esfuerzos de preservación también ofrecen oportunidades para crear conexiones mediante el desarrollo de narrativas que son importantes para la comunidad, para que puedan ver representadas sus prácticas culturales.

Este estudio proporciona a los futuros investigadores una referencia fundamental para ayudar a profundizar el conocimiento sobre las instituciones que custodian el patrimonio indígena y su papel en la comunidad. El estudio ofrece sugerencias prácticas para desarrollar e incorporar enfoques de museología crítica a la creación de conexiones comunitarias con instituciones patrimoniales indígenas en la República Dominicana. También puede ayudar a los gestores del patrimonio y a los funcionarios públicos a mejorar la forma en que se diseñan los programas educativos sobre el patrimonio mientras se gestiona que las colecciones sean más relevantes para las comunidades a las que pretenden servir. Los futuros investigadores también pueden utilizar este estudio para identificar patrones en la participación de la comunidad y que pueda demostrar aún más el valor de enmarcar críticamente los esfuerzos de para mejorar las iniciativas de preservación del patrimonio. El estudio contribuye a sentar las

bases de un enfoque práctico para la creación de compromisos multivocales y puntos de encuentro inclusivos para la autodeterminación cultural. Con la autodeterminación se busca conectar de manera significativa a la comunidad con el patrimonio indígena en la República Dominicana bajo el cuidado público y privado.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Arlene Álvarez was born in La Romana, Dominican Republic in 1973. She obtained a master's degree in public administration from Baruch College through the National Urban Fellowship Program, and a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Political Science from Rutgers University in the United States. She was appointed the director of the Altos de Chavón Regional Museum of Archaeology in the Dominican Republic for 19 years where she oversaw all aspects of collections care, community outreach and educational development. Arlene Álvarez served as a coordinator for the SAMP Intercontinental Museum Network where she collaborated in several projects between museums from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Sweden. She also worked as program coordinator for the Center for Latino Arts and Culture-New Brunswick, and the Hispanic Images Project-Newark Campus, at Rutgers University.

She is an independent heritage management consultant and instructor for the Museum Studies Graduate Program at Harvard University Extension School. She became a part time affiliated PhD researcher within the ERC-Synergy Nexus 1492 Project at Leiden University's Faculty of Archaeology in 2014. Her research interests include heritage management, community participation, and social development.